

**HISTORY AND
PROGRESS OF
JEFFERSON COUNTY**



LORECIA EAST

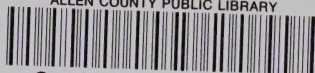
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HISTORY AND PROGRESS OF JEFFERSON COUNTY

Texas

by
LORECIA EAST

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by

Lorecia East

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by

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DEDICATION

In appreciation of their continued love and thoughtfulness this book is affectionately dedicated to my four beloved children—Olive, Willene, John Langdon and Harold Thomas.

PREFACE

To relate the history and progress of Jefferson County from its humble beginnings to its present form, is, at least, the purpose of this offering.

With Jefferson County as a Spanish land grant, we begin the history and proceed from there through the founding of the county, the coming of the first pioneer families and Jefferson County in recent years.

The presence of Jefferson County among the leading counties of the state is due, in no small part, to those hardy pioneers who, in defiance of all obstacles, struck the root of civilization deep into the soil of their country. Midst pestilence, Indian watch and wild animals, they pressed forward to form the foundation of a county and establish a government.

I cannot think of a greater honor than that of perpetuating the lives and achievements of those noble pioneers, who carved out an empire, and left a glorious heritage to us and our children.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author of this book expresses her thanks and appreciation to all who helped in gathering information for publishing the History of Jefferson County. To mention a few:

Tyrrell Park Library, Jefferson County Court Records, Enterprise and Journal, "Old-Timer" a historian of this area gave valuable facts. Mrs. Eleanor Weinbaum, Mrs. Laura Hargraves Smith, Mrs. W. D. Bond, Mrs. Carroll Ward, Mrs. Evelyn Wiess Perryman, Mrs. A. B. Abisher, W. E. Bogan, Mrs. L. B. Leach, John West, Mrs. W. W. Kyle, D. M. Hebert, Mrs. Kathleen Welch, Mrs. Vivian Blomley, Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Wiess, Mrs. Lucy Echols. Also my children, Mrs. Daniel H. Holmes, Mrs. Harry Leger, Major John L. East and Tommy East who encouraged and assisted me in many ways.

Members of the Beaumont Writers' Club gave useful criticisms and encouragement. Many others furnished family history and pictures.

To all of the above and many others, I am truly grateful.

Lorecia E. East

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Aerial view of the Port of Beaumont, looking N.W. The port is in the foreground and the city of Beaumont is in the background.



Wedding picture of Mr.E.S.Wiess, son of Napoleon Wiess, and Mrs. Wiess, daughter of Neil McGaffey.



Mrs. Jim Sparks, Worthy C. Sparks, and Mrs. W.C. Sparks.



Mrs. Jim Sparks and Mrs. Alice Merrill



Heberts Home, 128 years old, built by slave labor.



Paul Millird home, Blanchett Street, built 1899



Kyle's home, 1530 Sabine Pass, a land mark.



Dinner-time in the rice field



Rice thrashing in the early 1900s.



Pumping plant on a canal near China, Texas



Typical rice harvesting machines, which cut and tie the rice into bundles. A group of bundles drawn in sharp at top to turn weather is called a "shock". Rows of shocks left in the field until thrashing time.



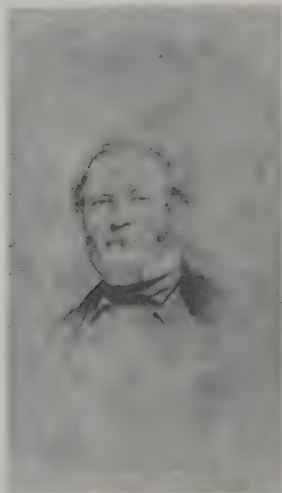
One of the out-houses at Wiess Bluff.



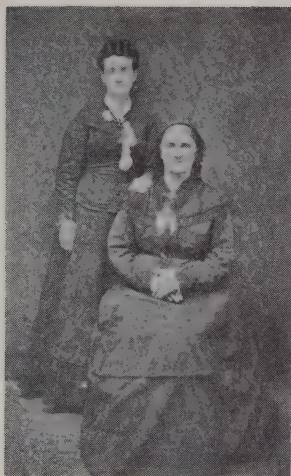
Simon Wiess old home with members of family
at Wiess Bluff



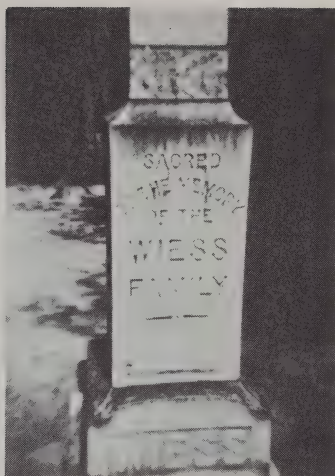
Mrs. Simon Wiess



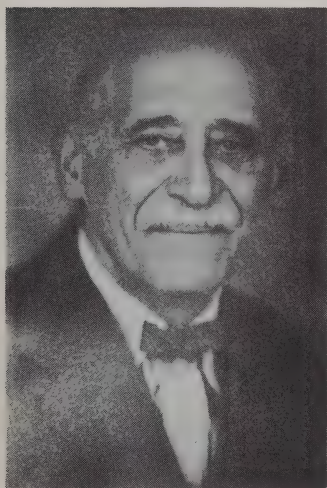
Simon Wiess



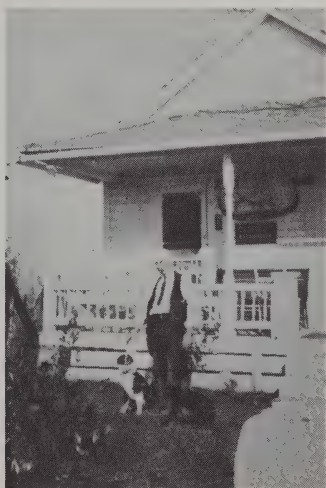
Pauline Wiess
and mother



Family graveyard
Wiess Bluff, back
of house.



H.A.Pperlstein



Dr.N.E.Laidacker
China, Texas



Old Homestead, 891 Liberty Ave., across from
Post Office. Was in suburb when first built.



Old Yokum Place



Old timers on canal bridge, China, Texas



Pears on tree at home, China, Texas



Yokum Place



A wolf hunt, near China, Texas



A farm place near China, Texas L.R. Yancy.



A resident near Nome, Texas



1915 storm in China, Texas



A.B. Abisher's home, China, Texas



J.T.Hudspeth, China, Texas



Allis, Opal, and Owen Tirplin



A thrashing crew near China, Texas



Jno. East's Daughter
Olive, Mrs. D.H. Holmes



Mrs. Harry Leger
Jno. East's daughter
Willene.



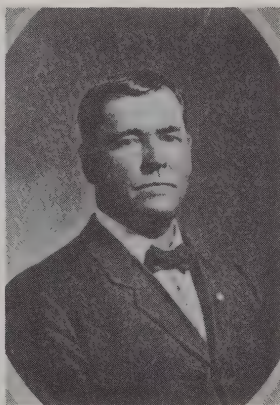
John East, Peacock
Military Academy



Mrs. Geo. H. East
About 1890



D. H. Holmes, husband
of Olive East.



Geo. East, early
China pioneer



J.A.Windham farm, Nome, Texas



Anna Clark and Elsie Cole



Farm home of J.A.Windham,Nome,Texas



O'Brien Oak,foot of Orleans, bows reach
50' wide,100 ' across circle of shade.



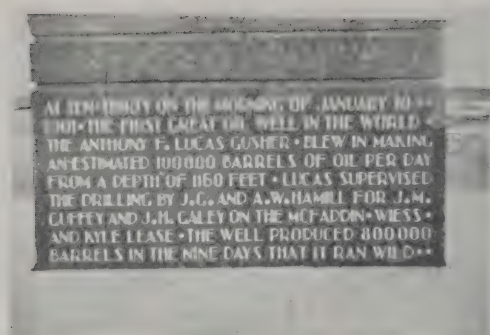
Mrs.N.C.Clark and Ruth,China,Texas



Mrs.Effie Clark and Elsie,China,Texas



Miss Bertha Daniel, Anna Daniel, Leona
Conklin, Lillian Conklin, China, Texas



Monument to first oil well, Beaumont,
Texas, January 10th, 1901.



Lucas Gusher
monument.



Mrs. Martha Allen,
(1896) Sabine, Texas

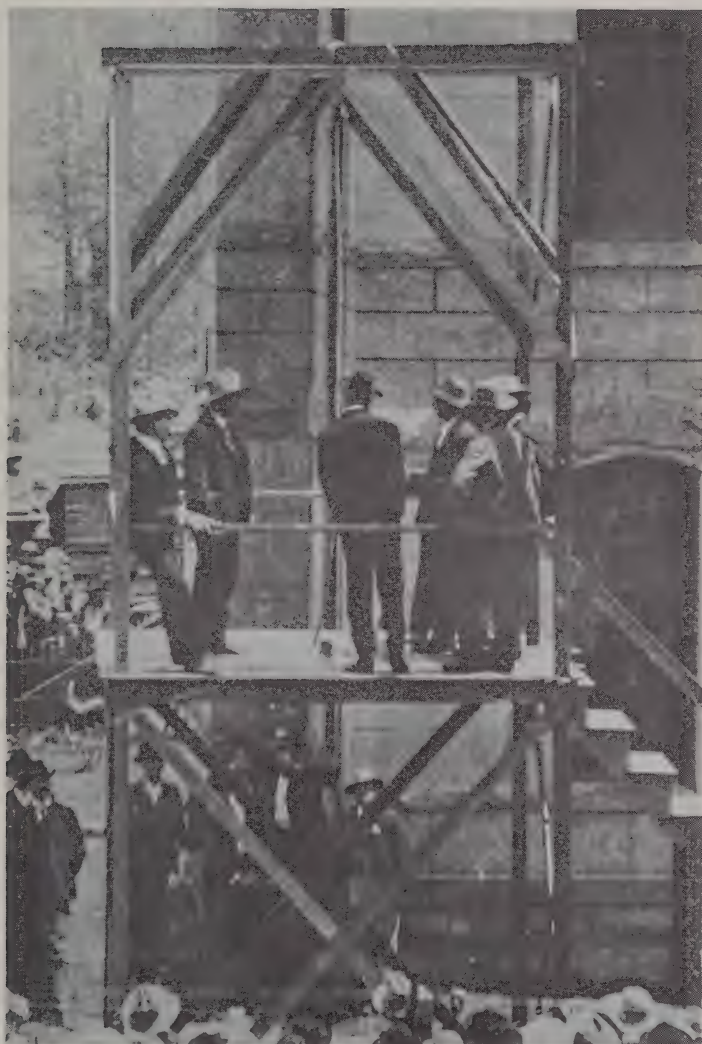


Front row, left to right, Adinell Granger (deceased). Maude Granger, now Mrs. C.C. King, Ada Granger, later Mrs. R.L. Mangum, (deceased) Back Row; Irene Granger, later Mrs. C.H. Walker (deceased) Edgar Granger. Children of Mrs. and Cap. B.F. Granger, Sabine Pass, Texas.



Windsor Hotel, Sabine, Texas.

Built about 1894.



Scaffold built for the last public hanging
in Jefferson County



Uncle Joe Chastine and Aunt Molly. Uncle Joe's mother lived to be 102, Sabine Pass.

SCHOOL HOUSES, SABINE PASS, TEX.



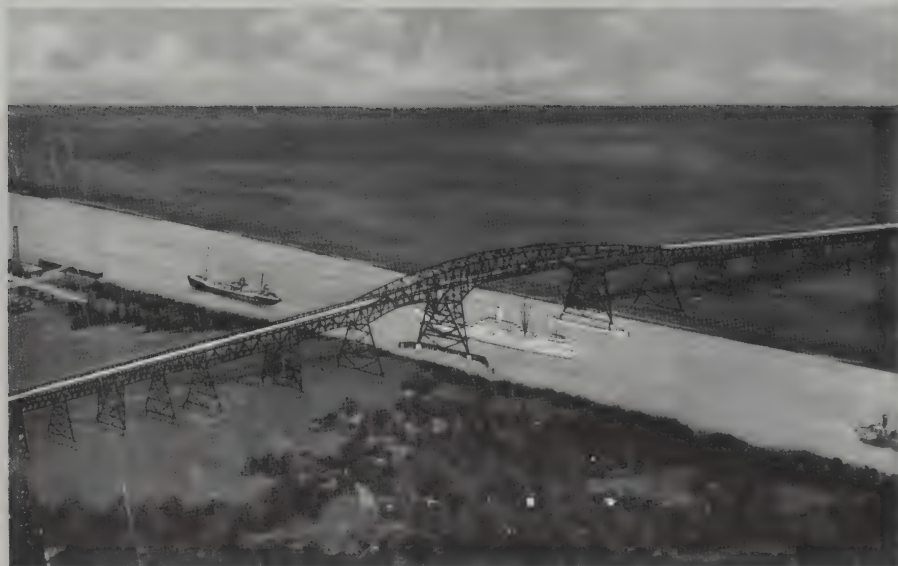
First school houses, Sabine Pass, Texas.



Country road at Sabine Pass, Texas



J.F.Douglas and Hallie Granger, 1896.



Port Arthur-Orange bridge over the Neches river,
on Texas Highway 87.5.7 miles long,176' high.



Left to right: Mary Carey, later Mrs. Jerry B. Johnson (deceased) Irene Granger, later Mrs. C.H. Walker, (deceased). Back: Richard Carey, Jr. Beaumont



Frank Douglas, year 1898



Present Jefferson County
Court House



Where invasion of
Sabine Pass defeated
by small group fighters.



Mrs. Lorecia East, author of this book taking
notes on Dick Dowling monument.

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Hallie Granger, Florence Gripon, 1895.



Mrs. Kathleen Welch, great-great daughter of John McGaffey, Sabine Pass first settler.



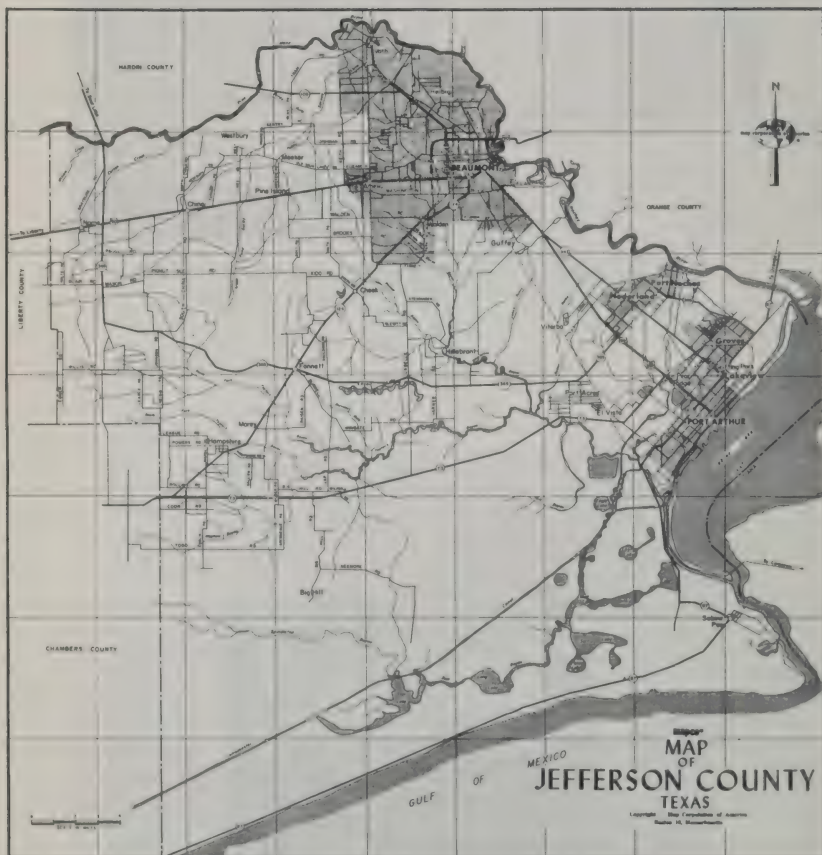
Mary Carey and
Irene Granger



John McGaffey's old
family graveyard



Home of Miss Mary Paige, one of first
school teachers



CHAPTER 1

HISTORY AND PROGRESS OF JEFFERSON COUNTY

In enumerating the material progress of Jefferson County, its commercial supremacy and present prosperity as well as future possibilities of the county, it is well to remember some of its great pioneer families. Through their fortitude, they laid the foundation for the greater commonwealth of the county.

Jefferson is a wealthy county located on the lower Coastal Plain of Southeast Texas bordering the Gulf of Mexico on the South, Lake Sabine on the Southeast corner and the Neches River on the East.

The county comprises an area of 945 square miles of black clay, heavy clay and silty clay loam. Over 21,000,63 are in cultivation and many acres in marshland and forests.

This region is characterized by long summers and short mild winters. The summer temperatures seldom exceed 100°F., and as a rule the heat is tempered by cool breezes from the Gulf. During January and February, sudden drops in temperature can be expected by cold north winds. A rise in temperature can be expected within 24 hours after one of these sudden drops.

The altitude is sea level to 100 feet, the growing season is 286 days a year with 53.66 rainfall.

Average Number of Fogs per Year.....	29
Average Hour at Which Fogs Lift.....	7:58 A.M.
Average Number of Clear Days.....	117
Average Number of Partly Cloudy Days.....	191
Average Number of Cloudy Days.....	57
Prevailing Wind is.....	South-Southeast
Average Date — First Killing Frost.....	Nov. 25

Average Date — Last Killing Frost.....March 5

Source of information:

U. S. Department of Commerce,
Weather Bureau Sub-Station 4,
Texas Agriculture Experiment Station.

Records at the County Court House show that the nucleus of Jefferson County as it is today lay outside its present boundaries. It was formerly known as the Cow Bayou settlement of the municipality of Liberty organized in 1835, from which the present county grew.

Liberty municipality from which Jefferson County came into being is one of Texas' oldest towns which was established in 1756, by the *padres* who built the Mission of *Nuestra Senora de la Luz* on the bank of the Trinity River.

The Trinity was the principle means of transportation into the village in those days, before the American Revolution, many years before Mexico won its independence from Spain and before Texas colonists revolted against Mexican rule.

Approximately 61 years after the mission was built and the first tiny settlement developed, a number of French refugees from the Army of Napoleon crossed into Texas territory from Louisiana and settled on the Trinity River, around a tiny post established in 1809. They turned to planting vineyards and planned to cultivate the grapes which had given them livelihoods back in their native France.

Unfortunately, the Spanish did not look with favor on this French "invasion" and eventually the settlement was broken up and scattered by the Spaniards so that only a few remnants remained.

Under a settlement system used in those days, Joseph

Verlein, in the 1820's, was issued an impresario grant, whereby he contracted with the government to settle a minimum of 100 families in a given district. The holder of such a grant was responsible for the welfare and administration of his particular colony and his personal profit was derived from its growth.

TITLE CAUSED TROUBLE

By 1831, Verlein's settlement, called Atoscosta, had 31 families and had its first trouble with the Mexican government over title to the land granted to the colonist, some of which was already claimed by the settlers who had preceded the Verlein grant.

This resulted in a law designed to keep settlers from the United States out of the Texas territory. Although most of the colonists were not politically minded and cared little whether they were under Spain, Mexico or the United States, they objected to such restrictions on future settlers.

About this time, a municipality was established and given the name of Holy Trinity of Liberty, which eventually was shortened to the Liberty we know today. Liberty became the head of a large domain, the capital of a municipality which included what today is Liberty, Jefferson, Hardin, Orange, Chambers, Polk, San Jacinto and Montgomery counties, although the total population was less than Liberty can count today.

JEFFERSON COUNTY CREATED

In 1836, only a month before Texas won its independence from Mexico, Jefferson County came into being. First settlement within the present confines of the county was at Tevis Bluff, on the Neches River, where Noah and Nancy Tevis settled about 1824.

Jefferson County was officially organized on May 31, 1837, when the court of the county held its first meeting.

HENRY MILLARD WAS LEADER

Arriving from his native Natchez, Mississippi, in the 1830's, Henry Millard immediately became interested in planning a county government organization. Mr. Millard soon became one of the leaders in government of this area. In 1835 he was delegated from the municipality of Liberty to a convention held in San Felip de Austin on the Brazos where organization of a government for the proposed Republic of Texas was discussed. When he returned he went to work in earnest to set up a government in this area, selecting Tevis Bluff as the county seat.

Before plans for a government materialized, Mr. Millard found himself in an all out war with Mexico, and all efforts turned to problems created by that conflict.

MILLARD GOES TO WAR

Millard answered the call of his country along with all able-bodied men from this area. General Sam Houston made Millard a lieutenant colonel in command of the first regiment of infantry of the Army of Texas.

The little settlement at Tevis Bluff soon began to feel the impact of the war. Refugees, fleeing from other parts of Texas and attempting to reach the United States as Santa Anna's conquering armies marched in this direction, camped in tents over the area that is now Beaumont's business district. They were waiting with household goods piled over the camp area, for the swollen waters of the Neches River

to recede so they could continue their march to the borders of the United States when a courier from Houston brought word of the defeat of Santa Anna at the Battle of San Jacinto.

ORGANIZATION SANCTIONED

After the war, although formation of the county had already been decided upon, it took some time to set up machinery for a county government. According to the November 6, 1955 Beaumont Enterprise, the first meeting of the county court met May 31, 1837 and officially sanctioned the organization of Jefferson County.

Minutes of that session read: "In conformity with the law of organization a county court, I, Thomas H. Brennen, clerk of said court, assisted by William Stevenson Sr., and in the presence of G. A. Patillo, one of the associate justices of said county court, have entered the names of the citizens who are free holders and are subject to act as jurors in said court. This is being done at this time because there was no county court at the last stated term."

The list of the county's first qualified voters was recorded as follows: Wilson Sill, William G. Hatton, John Towsend, C. C. P. Welsh, Benjamin Johnson, R. Ballieu, William McFaddin, Uriah Gibson, David Garner, Joseph Ritcher, Stephen Simmons, Benjamin Allen, Robert Hatton, Isaac Garner, Thomas Rowe, Uriah Harris, D. St. Clair, Charles Crows, Gilbert Stephenson, W. D. Smith, James Dyson, John Stephenson, Elisha Stephenson, Abraham Winfrey, Marmaduke Hatton, B. Arthur, David Harmon, John Cole, William Hayes, W. H. Orion, Elisha Allen, John Caruthers, William Clark, Clark Beach, John Bland, George Allen,

Charles Meyers, Silas Parson, James Simmons, Joseph Young, William Hatton, N. Holbert, James Wane, J. F. Robinson, James Jett, Peyton Bland, John Harmon, Thomas Hart, Elijah Allen, Charles Coborn, C. West, S. N. Mathias, A. Jett, and Aaron Allen.

TAX OFFICE SET UP

And so it was that the first Jefferson County Tax Department was set up at an August 7, 1837 meeting of the county tax assessor at a salary of \$150.00. He was charged with making assessments only. The sheriff, David Garner, was designated to collect the taxes.

From the date of the county organization until about 1862, county court members devoted most of their time to setting up precincts, outlining school districts and locating and arranging for working roads.

One of the big jobs of the county in those days, too, was the licensing of ferries that operated at intervals along the river.

Civil War days put heavy burdens on the county court. The county was the concentration point for soldiers who were embarking for Sabine Pass by boat to join the Confederate force headquarters there.

Families of these men had to be cared for, so a committee was set up by the court that was charged with seeing to the needs of these families. Arms, too, were a vital factor and on February 17, 1862, the county court drafted all available arms in the county for use in the prosecution of the war. Andrew J. Tevis, then sheriff, was instructed to gather all of these arms and turn them over to the county treasurer, J. J. Herring, who was named custodian of the armory.

WAR TAX ORDERED

In 1862, the court ordered a war tax of ten cents on the \$100.00 valuation. The revenue from this tax was

used for the support of Company E. Liken's Battalion, Texas Volunteers, and members of their families.

Delinquent taxes of all soldiers were paid by the county. Raising right-of-way funds to pay land owners for putting roads through their property did not bother the early county officials. Roads were built wherever they were needed. Every male county resident was required to work on the roads 10 days every year. The county court rarely met that it did not approve a list of men who were immediately eligible for road work.

PLANS ARE OUTLINED

County court officials held court in their homes, and sometimes under the O'Brien oak, a living land mark still standing on the bank of the Neches River, before the courthouse was erected. In 1852, plans for the first Jefferson County Courthouse were outlined. The original plan specified that the building should be 40 feet square and two stories. The plan further provided that the building should have a belfry and that it should be ready for occupancy on January 1, 1854.

Many legal battles were fought in that first county courthouse. It served Jefferson County until June, 1930, when the present courthouse was erected in December, 1931.

The first public hanging in Jefferson County was in 1855, according to a handed down account by a late pioneer, Martin Hebert, who often told of the first public hanging. Mr. Hebert and his brother Ben were escorted to the scene by their father as punishment for having quarrelled. "He wanted us to see what happened to 'bad boys'," Mr. Hebert said, according to an old-timer. Sheriff James Ingalls arranged the scaffold by the use of a heavy pole between two blackgum trees,

a long ladder, and a rope. The victim was a white man named Jack Bunch.

The last public hanging was in 1903. The victim was a negro, Willie Green, and the trap was sprung by Sheriff Ras Landry. The snapshot of the macabre event was taken by R. L. Brown.

CRADLE - TO - RECORDS

In the bulging archives of the County Clerk's office are the records of marriage, birth, death, personal property, cattle brand, alien ownership, and federal lien records, along with recordings of licenses of dentists, optometrists, funeral directors, records of probate matters as well as wills, and recordings of the discharges of armed services personnel in this county.

FIRST TRAFFIC LAW

The first venture into the field of traffic control within the county was back in 1882. On July 1, 1882, an ordinance was passed for the security of persons against accidents in the streets, and made the law applicable to wagons, carts, hacks, buggies or other vehicles with teams or any team without such vehicle.

French and Spanish explorers and trappers who came to trade with the Indians were the first white men in what is now Jefferson County. In about 1824, Noah and Nancy Tevis and their seven children emigrated to Texas. Some say they came from New Jersey, while others claim they came from Tennessee. However, records substantiate of their log cabin having been built on the bank of the Neches River and their contributions to settling of the county.

The marshes and numerous rivers and bayous abounding with raccoon, opossum, mink, beaver and

muskrats made a lively trapping industry; but aside from that the settlement of that time was a wilderness of a piny woods frontier community.

After a few years of struggling for a livelihood, Noah Tevis died. Nancy handled her brood and looked after her property rights with stubborn, strong efficiency.

HISTORY AND PROGRESS OF JEFFERSON COUNTY

After the taxing, panic stricken days of war with Mexico were over, smoke went up from the mud chimneys of the new cabins clustered around Tevis Bluff. Time had come to organize a township. So in the Tevis' log cabin well over a century ago, according to a tattered document on record in the Jefferson County Courthouse, a town was born which was named Beaumont, and which came to be the county seat of Jefferson County.

The record states that on July 12, 1837, Henry Millard, Joseph P. Pulsifer, and Thomas B. Huling, owners of a parcel of land on the Neches River containing 100 acres, visited the cabin of Nancy Tevis for the purpose of combining their efforts into a mutual agreement in the formation of township.

CHAPTER 2 BEAUMONT

"WE ARE INFORMED THAT A TOWN HAS LATELY been laid out of the tidewater of the River Neches, at a place known as Tevis Bluff, 30 miles

from Sabine Bay. Its situation is said to be one of the most delightful in Texas and it has already commenced improving at a rapid rate. It is spoken of as a town which promises to be one of considerable importance. It has received the name of BEAUMONT, which, from the description of the place, strikes our fancy as very appropriate.

Telegraph and Texas Register,
San Felipe de Austin,
Monday, October 26, 1835."

The "Town that was lately laid out" has grown into a metropolis today with a population of well over 120,000 people. It is the county seat of Jefferson County—the southeasternmost county in Texas.

Situated on the Neches River Waterway, located in latitude 30 degrees, 4 minutes and 38 seconds North and longitude 94 degrees, 4 minutes and 25 seconds West, it is 20 air miles from the Gulf of Mexico. Although it is located on the coastal plains and a tide-water channel, it is 22 feet above sea level.

That Beaumont "is spoken of as a town which promises to be one of considerable importance" is indisputably attested to by the growth it has enjoyed in population and by its importance as the financial and trade center of one of the major industrial areas of the nation.

It was here on January 10, 1901, that "Oil Became an Industry," with the discovery of the Spindletop Oil Field when the Lucas Gusher blew in with "the roar heard round the world."

In subsequent years, many giant industries have located in and near this city to convert the petroleum and natural gas produced locally, and brought by pipe lines from other fields in Texas and adjoining states,

into a myriad of products that are essential to the economic well being of the nation.

Population in 1856 is listed in yellowed old document resting in Courthouse files. Enumeration of the free white population of the county of Jefferson, A.D., 1856.

Names of parents or guardians — Children

William Ivey, guardian —

Virginia Millard

Laura Millard

Otho Millard

George Block —

George Block

Lepord Block

Anstina Block

Augusta Block

Worthy Patridge —

Rosella Patridge

Laura Patridge

Worthy Patridge, guardian of Mary Delano

C. P. Mangum —

Sarah Mangum

Inzus Nojez —

James Nojez

H. M. Hudson —

Elizabeth N. Hudson

Margaret H. Hudson

Charles N. Baxler —

Isabella Baxler

James Ingalls, guardian of —

T. T. Rowley

G. H. Rowley

Louanza Calder —

Hilton Calder
Phoebe Calder

Iriah Junker —

Emily Junker
Opelia Junker
Edwina Junker

Joseph Hebert —

Mary A. Hebert
Joseph A. Hebert
Benjamin C. Hebert

Filed August 20 A.D. 1856.

G. W. O'Brien, clerk

Co. C. J. Co.

Beaumont, (Beautiful Hill), so named because of a slight elevation replaced the name, Tevis Bluff, Cow Bayou settlement, Jefferson City, and other names.

The city owes its development to lumber, cattle, agriculture, oil and access to the sea, and to the courageous pioneers whose venturesome spirit inspired their conquests. Some of the Pioneers who have hewn their way to achievement in the wilderness of east Texas name's are on street markers and stores.

Some of these pioneers are descendants of Acadians who came to this wilderness in the early years after the expulsion from Nova Scotia in 1755. Many of them drifted west from Louisiana, where they had been transplanted, and are among the first to have settled in the frontier of east Texas.

Familiar names on road and street markers are: McFaddin, Broussard, Ogden, Hebert, Millard, Carroll, Keith, Blanchette, West, Hargraves, LeBlanc, Turner, Smythe, Holmes, Weiss, Bar, Perkins and many others.

Commerce in Beaumont received its impetus about 1829 when pioneer Millard opened the first store

handling such commodities as were essential in that age. Although history does not record in detail the stock handled in the Millard establishment, it was probably the type of any cross-roads general merchandise store — groceries, ox-yolks, harnesses, saddles and coffins.

There were only a handful of people living in this area at that time, although covered wagons were arriving steadily. Boats were unloading families, household goods and a few crude tools. Then the struggle of wrestling their livelihood from the wilderness began. Friendliness which is known as southern hospitality had its beginnings then when all hands turned out to help one another in log-cutting and barn-raising.

Exchanging of seeds and lending of tools and teams was common among early settlers. Log cabins were built from the abounding forests about them. Simple tools used by these pioneers in preparing their timber were a froe and mallet. The froe was driven into the log with hand-made wooden mallet. The boards were split off in even thicknesses. Hand-hewn shingles were made from cypress.

Soon there were little clearings and patches of vegetable appeared here and there, which was shared with the new comers. Rice was first grown in little "Providence patches" and the wives pounding the grain in home-made wooden mortar to remove the hulls. Pioneer's refrigeration was the smokehouse where he cured meat by smoking methods. From the roof the meat was hung on poles and smoked from hickory or oak wood.

Another method of refrigeration which these pioneers used was of hanging jugs of milk and pans of meat down in the well just above the water level. In

that way these commodities were kept fresh for several days. Exchange butcher was common in those days. A butcher club of a dozen or so neighbors was formed when one man would butcher a beef on a certain day of the week and lending so many pounds of meat to the other members. In turn, the other members would do likewise. The meat was often cut in strips, saturated in salt and dried in the sun until cured. Then there was hominy-making when the housewife soaked dried corn in lye water overnight to soften the hulls. Then she would wash the grains many times to remove all trace of lye and then place in the mortar and the hulls pounded out. Soap was made by boiling tallow in lye water for several hours, or until all trace of tallow was melted and a thick congelation achieved. Then when cooled overnight, it hardened and was ready to cut into slabs. Social life was simple and uncomplicated. Pioneers found their pleasure in folksy ways. Old-timers tell of spend-the-day parties, quilting parties, picnics, and square dances on Saturday nights if weather permitted.

On all occasions, a hostess had to reckon with the rains. If it rained before a party, it was compulsory to postpone the social because of deep mud that made the roads too slippery and dangerous for travel. If showers fell during the party, the hostess would often have to provide beds for her guests for the night.

Then in later years the social life expanded in scale as civic development progressed ; society began to function through organized clubs. The Crosby Opera House was built in 1883. According to the Beaumont Enterprise of November 6, 1955, an old billing for Friday, January 18, 1884 proclaims not opera, but a masquerade ball.

In 1901, the opening of the Kyle Opera House was a gala event. The new opera house had a seating capacity of 1,700, and many were forced to stand up. The attraction was "Gay Mr. Goldstein."

"Too much could not be said of the new Kyle Opera House and Beaumonters last night showed their appreciation of the public spirit and enterprise of Mr. Kyle as well as the management. As heretofore stated, it is in the Greenwald Circuit, which means the best attractions that visit the South. Beaumont is generally admitted to be the best show town in the State, and they justify their reputation by the crowded house last night. The building is one that every Beaumont can justly be proud of. It is in the front rank of modern opera buildings, and a fitting monument to its proprietor and the city." (From the Enterprise, October 15, 1901).

BEAUMONT TWICE A BOOM TOWN

Twice a boom town, Beaumont today enjoys a solid prosperity based up a diversification in business and industry which assures a continued growth. The timberlands were responsible for the city's first boom, when sawmills lined the banks of the Neches River and screaming saws bit into resiny logs to produce lumber for a world market.

As the lush pine forests receded before the timberjacks' saw and ax and the tempo of the hungry saws began to slow, Captain Lucas succeeded in sending a drill bit into the earth at Spindletop to bring in the first gusher which made Beaumont once again a boom town.

This boom, too, subsided, but the oil industry has come of age in Beaumont and vast refineries sprang

up in the area to convert the black crude into salable products. The oil industry in turn invited numerous allied industries until today the area is heralded as the petrochemical empire of the world.

As new industrial plants mushroom along the Neches River, the area appears to be booming for the third time, but this boom will continue indefinitely, observers say, because it is based upon a planned economy and an abundance of natural resources.

A survey made by the local Chamber of Commerce of the city's growth and expansion follows:

BEAUMONT AND JEFFERSON COUNTY ENJOY STEADY POPULATION GROWTH

Beaumont and Jefferson County have had a phenomenal growth. Population by years and percentage increase over previous census is as follows:

Year	Beaumont	Per Cent Increase	Jefferson County	Per Cent Increase
1900	9,427		14,329	
1910	20,640	118.9	38,182	168.2
1920	40,422	95.8	73,120	88.8
1930	57,732	42.8	133,391	82.4
1940	59,061	2.23	145,329	8.9
1950	94,014	59.2	195,083	34.2
1958	122,485 Est.	30.3	240,000 Est.	23.0
Population Increase in United States			1940-50	14.5%
Population Increase in Texas			1940-50	20.2%
Population Increase in Jefferson County			1940-50	34.2%
Population Increase in Beaumont, Texas			1940-50	59.2%

Sources:

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Census Bureau, U. S. Department of Commerce
1952 Texas Almanac
Figures for 1958 Estimate

By: Industrial Department

Chamber of Commerce, Beaumont, Texas

CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS IN BEAUMONT

The story of progress made by Beaumont during the past 36 years is well told by the number of new residential units constructed each year and the value of building permits issued for commercial and industrial expansion.

Year	<u>Number of Housing Units</u>	<u>Amount Permits For New Homes</u>	<u>Total All Bldg. Permits</u>
1922			\$ 1,530,748.00
1925			1,638,870.25
1930			2,666,327.23
1936			1,199,728.72
1939	400	\$ 975,455.00	1,714,243.30
1941	369	851,839.39	2,240,612.06
1942	419	810,949.00	2,496,219.29
1944	230	288,024.00	833,759.89
1945	151	288,410.00	1,833,813.87
1946	482	1,730,170.00	3,902,766.00
1947	686	2,498,606.00	7,126,140.00
1948	1066	4,049,587.00	9,602,606.00
1949	883	3,593,315.65	10,003,765.00
1950	914	4,094,695.00	9,720,475.42
1951	643	3,227,860.00	7,081,148.00
1952	844	5,807,241.10	7,607,002.10
1953	643	2,881,440.00	8,451,933.35
1954	1182	5,093,740.00	8,942,793.47
1955	1135	4,381,005.00	9,092,543.35
1956	837	5,242,813.50	16,227,682.57
1957	630	5,555,631.50	17,405,739.09
1958	1050	9,280,504.49	20,467,475.49

Building in this city has been done without the influence of any kind of Military or Defense installations. Since the war, construction of residential units has been carried on without the impetus of any kind of temporary condition.

Source: Office of City Building Inspector

Prepared by: Industrial Department
Chamber of Commerce
Beaumont, Texas

A COUNTY'S LIVING LANDMARK

If the O'Brien Oak would only talk, it would probably relate many tales, both legal and romantic, for court and courting parties were held beneath its boughs according to stories related by old-timers.

Tradition has it that Jefferson County Court was sometimes held by pioneer jurists beneath the tree, and young lovers seeking seclusion enjoyed a peaceful rendezvous away from the gazing eyes of their elders.

The picturesque setting on the bank of the Neches River on what is now Orleans Street became known as Lover's Lane. Pioneer days often found belles and beaux leisurely promenading along this path on Sunday afternoons.

This living landmark towering at the foot of Orleans Street is now owned by the City of Beaumont, and owes its life to the O'Brien family. When the city purchased the property for the opening of streets from Captain O'Brien, the deed stipulated that the tree should never be destroyed. Today the old oak stands about seventy-five feet, and it shades a space extending from the rim of the Turning Basin on the river to the opposite side of Riverside Drive.

According to stories related by pioneers, the oak sapling was brought from Village Creek in about 1848 by Captain Johnson, and planted it on his property. When Captain O'Brien purchased the property, the oak tree was said to have been in a bad state of health. He administered treatment and it recovered.

With its life insured in the deed to the city and the interest of the public for its preservation, this old landmark's destiny seems good for another century or two.

The Temple of the Brave, located on the bank of

the Neches River in Jefferson County, is small in size, but implies a great significance, for the people of Jefferson County owe their lives to the achievement which it represents.

The Temple is a constant reminder of that small group of brave and courageous men who so valiantly resisted an attempted invasion on the Fort at Sabine Pass.

According to Texas history, three federal gunboats appeared off Sabine Pass on the morning of September twenty-four, 1863, when only a handful of Confederates were on guard of the small fort.

This small company successfully defeated the invasion, and captured the steamer Clifton and the gunboat Sachen, gaining one of the most surprising victories of the war.

Another reminder of the great feat is the Clifton Walking Beam, relic of the Battle of Sabine Pass mounted on a concrete foundation overlooking the river. The inscription on the beam tells the story of the Battle of 1863, and reminds the people of Jefferson County of the debt of gratitude they owe the warriors of that battle.

The Clifton was disabled broadside from the fort and settled inside present West Jetty about one hundred feet from the channel. It remained there until 1912, when the beam was pulled off from the submerged ship and placed on display in Keith Park. Later it was removed to its present location on the River Front.

OUTSTANDING LANDMARKS

Probably Beaumont's most outstanding landmark is Spindletop located on the spot where the Lucas Gusher

spewed its black treasure high in the sky and ushered in a new era of industrial progress. Thousands of tourists and homefolks as well, visit the 65-foot high monument erected in honor of those who pioneered in this discovery. Located a mile south of Beaumont, the monument is open to the public.

HERO OF SABINE PASS

Another Monument of historical importance is of Dick Dowling at Sabine Pass. The monument is located on the site of a Civil War battle between a Confederate shore battery and a Federal fleet. Inscribed on the cement monument are these words: In memory of Lt. Richard W. Dowling and his men. TEXAS REMEMBERS THE FAITHFULNESS AND VALOR OF HER SONS AND COMMENDS THEIR HEROIC EXAMPLE TO FUTURE.

The historical site provides picnic facilities and a fine view of ships entering and leaving the Gulf of Mexico.

RECREATION

Beaumont has provided well for those of all ages who wish to spend their leisure in some type of recreational activity. In addition to the available facilities for adult sports, the city through its Recreation Department sponsors many programs and activities for the youth of the community.

The following is a listing of the major recreational facilities:

- 1—18-hole Club Golf Course
- 1—18-hole Municipal Golf Course
- 5—Theaters (White) 7,016 Seats
- 2—Theaters (Colored) 1,400 Seats

- 3—Drive-In Theaters (White) 1,914 Cars
- 17—Softball Diamonds—6 Lighted
- 5—Baseball Diamonds—3 Lighted
- 15—Basketball Teams
- 17—Tennis Courts (7 Courts Lighted)
- 22—Parks and Playgrounds (724 Maintained Acres)
- 1—Kiddy Park
- 4—Swimming Pools
- 2—Bowling Alleys (44 Alleys)
- 3—Community Centers
- 2—Recreation Rooms
- 1—Garden Center
- 14—Wading Pools
- 1—Riding Academy
- Y.M.C.A. & Y.W.C.A.

The City Recreation Department conducts free tennis clinics and tournaments. In cooperation with the Red Cross, this agency also sponsors free swimming and lifesaving instructional programs. Many of the service clubs and other organized groups sponsor various competitive and recreational programs for those of school age.

SOURCE: Local Recreational Offices

PREPARED BY: Industrial Department
Chamber of Commerce
Beaumont, Texas

TAXATION

Assessed Valuations and Tax Rates for Selected Years

Year	City of Bmt. Assessed Valuation	City Tax Rate	Beaumont Independent School Tax Rate	Jefferson County Assessed Valuation
1933	\$ 57,405,130	\$1.78	\$.72	\$103,990,130
1938	57,938,150	1.78	.77	116,671,018
1942	60,082,300	1.95	.94	126,534,095
1945	60,509,300	1.85	1.11	153,962,120
1948	95,553,120	1.65	1.11	171,557,301
1949	102,640,530	1.67	1.13	206,680,813
1950	110,071,850	1.74	1.50	213,842,103
1951	119,532,920	1.64	1.50	223,642,994
1952	126,278,330	1.64	1.50	233,193,509
1953	131,709,400	1.64	1.50	242,895,279
1954	140,457,140	1.70	1.50	252,427,995
1955	148,449,600	1.72	1.50	268,414,445
1956	181,183,630	1.72	1.75	285,525,643
1957	186,424,170	1.72	1.75	305,386,919
1958	211,849,450	1.72	1.75	326,259,530

- a. The City of Beaumont assessment based on 50% of actual value.
- b. County assessment based on 40% of 1941 actual values.
- c. Tax rates are based on \$100.00 assessed valuation.
- d. Beaumont Independent School District levies tax on the basis of 51% of market value.
- e. The following taxes are levied on County assessed valuations.

State .....	.42	Port District .....	.25
Sea Wall .....	.30	Drainage No. 3 .....	.50
County	1.22	Drainage No. 4 .....	.79
Lamar .....	.04	Drainage No. 6 .....	.74
Navigation .....	.01 1/2	Drainage No. 7 .....	.29

Texas law provides for homestead exemption up to \$3,000.00 from State Tax. Of the above levies, the following apply to the City of Beaumont: County Tax, State Ad Valorem, Port District, Lamar College, Navigation, and Drainage District No. 6.

Texas has no personal income tax, no corporate income tax, nor general sales tax, but levies a franchise tax of \$2.00 per \$1,000.00 of corporate capitalization.

SOURCE: City & County Tax Offices

PREPARED BY: Industrial Department, Chamber of Commerce, Beaumont, Texas.

CHAPTER 3

PORT ARTHUR—NEDERLAND

Port Arthur is located on the north shore of Lake Sabine in the southeast corner of Texas in Jefferson County. It is the center of the world's greatest oil refining area, it is the port of entry and chief port of the United States Customs District of Sabine, the district including the four ports of Port Arthur, Beaumont, Lake Charles, and Sabine.

History dated back to 1853, when John and Melinda Sparks built the first home in what is now Port Arthur. By 1881 there were five homes nestled together on the banks of Lake Sabine. Then according to records at the Chamber of Commerce, a malignant disease

scoured the community leaving only the home of Sam Lee and his wife, Eliza Jane, one of John Sparks' daughters.

In February of 1894, one of the most severe blizzards ever to hit Texas froze over Lake Sabine and Galveston Bay. One year after the blizzard, Arthur Stilwell, a Kansas City Railroad financier, succeeded in building a railroad from Kansas City to the Gulf. Sam Lee's home, deserted after the blizzard, was used by the surveyors.

Thus, in 1895 began the present city of Port Arthur. The end of the railroad was still nine miles to the Gulf, so a canal was dug and finished in 1899.

Then came Spindletop oil gusher! ! ! Ten miles north of Port Arthur the first real oil strike of major consequence outside of Pennsylvania. The world was electrified with the news. Small refineries were built and the news brought the famed John W. (Bet-a-Million) Gates to Port Arthur. His confidence and investments spurred the growth of the city. He left it a library, a college, and a hospital.

Industry continues to develop, from that start at Spindletop boom, four huge refineries are now located in the Port Arthur area.

These plants together employ 14,300 people. Gulf Oil Corporation, The Texas Company, Atlantic Refining Company, and Pure Oil Company, pay out over \$7,888,332 monthly in payrolls.

Petrochemical industries have found the Port Arthur area an ideal location in recent years. Neches Butane, Goodrich, and Texas U.S. Chemical Company produce a variety of petrochemicals. Each of these plants is constantly expanding its operation. A total of 2,565 persons work in these four plants.

Other major industries include J&L Steel Barrel, United States Steel, Standard Brass, Great Lake Carbon, Port Drum, Mathieson Chemical Company, Shipbuilding and Repair and many other smaller industries.

The tallest bridge in the South is located on Highway 87 over the Neches River near Port Arthur. In addition to being the tallest bridge in the South, the Port Arthur-Orange span has the seventh high-vertical clearance in the United States. From water level to roadway it is forty-three feet higher than New Orleans' Huey P. Long Bridge across the Mississippi. By the same guage it is forty-three feet higher than the Brooklyn Bridge.

The bridge is a link in the scenic hug-the-coast highway from New Orleans to Brownsville, Texas. Actual cost of the span is given as \$2,734,718—\$75,000.00 from Jefferson County, \$1,141,742 from PWA; and \$842,976 from the Texas Highway Department. Subsequent Highway Department contracts for roads leading up to it bring the cost to approximately three million dollars, however. The main span is one hundred and seventy-six feet above the silty waters of the Neches. Its tiptop is two hundred and thirty feet above the river. In length it is 7,772 feet, nearly a mile and a half. The Neches below is an unimpressive stream. Its channel is less than one thousand feet wide.

Why is the bridge so high? Ten miles upstream Beaumont has its docks. When Port Arthur first began talking about a bridge over the Neches ship channel in 1927, Beaumont objected that its port would be bottled up. Beaumont refused to consider a bascule bridge with spans that could be raised to let tankers go by. It insisted that any span over the ship channel be high enough for an ocean-going liner to pass under

snugly. To raise a web of steel and concrete two hundred feet on this coastal marshland necessitated the mile and half length.

The bridge is considered typhoon-proof by engineers who built it. Trusses and girders were designed to resist wind forces of seventy-five pounds per square foot—the equivalent of a one hundred and forty-mile wind. Most unusual is the fact that the superstructure girder spans are supported on triangular towers forming a unit of truss span. These towers are “Battered” outward especially to resist hurricanes. G. G. Wickline, native Texan and bridge engineer for the Texas Highway Department, was engineer in charge. Ash-Howard Needles & Tammen of Kansas City and New York, consulting bridge engineers, made plans and specifications.

LEGEND OF PRINCESS KISSELPPOO

An ancient Indian tribe lived many years ago on the banks of Lake Sabine. The daughter of the chief was the most beautiful maiden for miles around and as she neared her fifteenth birthday, chiefs and strong braves from other tribes came to woo her. But the favored man, from a tribe to the north, was much older than the princess. The elders decided he should have the lovely princess, Kisselpoo, in marriage. After their decision, a young and strong brave from seven sleeps away came and won the favor of the lovely princess, but the elders would not relent and the date for the marriage to the old brave from the north was set. The night before the wedding Princess Kisselpoo and the young brave fled. The tribal medicine man called down the wrath of the gods upon the stranger and the princess. But the moon goddess was angered by this

treatment to her favored child, the princess, and caused a great hurricane to descend upon the lake and when the waves subsided, there was no trace of the village.

The moon goddess also decreed that the lake should disappear from the earth and since that day rivers have deposited their silt in the bed of the lake, slowly filling it up.

Port Arthur refines 844,460 barrels of crude oil or eleven per cent of the nation's oil each day. It has the world's largest petroleum butadine plant, and supplies twenty per cent of the nation's supply of ethylene. Port Arthur is the fourth largest industrial area in the state. Highest wage level in the state is paid refinery workers and there are more refinery workers in this county than any other county in the nation—Of the one hundred and ninety-six oil producing counties in the state of Texas.

Jefferson County ranks nineteenth in the total number of barrels of crude oil taken from the ground through the years.

There is doubt if there is another in the United States that has made the progress which Port Arthur has in such a short time. In 1910, the United States census showed a population of seven thousand and in 1920, 22,851. In 1923, the Camber of Commerce gave the population as 42,000. The population has continued to climb by leaps and bounds until now it is the second largest city in Jefferson County.

"The City of Nederland, Texas," estimated 1959 population, 10,548, is an attractive residential com-

munity located in the heart of Jefferson County's industrial area between Beaumont and Port Arthur. It was originally founded and settled by the Holland Dutch people in 1897; many of these early settlers' descendants are residents of the city today. Among the earliest of these pioneers were: G. J. Rienstra, J. Doornbos, P. Koelemay, Hugh Kitchen, C. D. Wagner, G. Vanderweg, and many others.

The cattle industry was at first the principal business of the towns people, but in the course of passing years, this soon gave way to rice farming, three large warehouses and a small mill were erected in the town and the entire county became a network of irrigation canals supplying water to the rice fields.

By 1911 there had developed a sincere cooperative and progressive spirit among the citizenry and an honest effort was begun to make the little town a more desirable place in which to live. In 1913 an electric interurban train began operating through Nederland, connecting Beaumont with Port Arthur; with the advent of this service rural electrification brought light and power to the homes and businesses of Nederland. 1922 was the boom year for Nederland, with the construction of the Humphrie Refinery at nearby Smith's Bluff and the Magnolia Refinery on the outskirts of Beaumont bringing many new workers to the area. This early refinery at Smith's Bluff was soon to be sold to the Pure Oil Company, to be developed into the vast plant that stands today, employing some one thousand workers. Constructed in 1923 were auxiliary facilities: such as a boiler house, laboratory, warehouse machine shop, compressor house, pump house, treating agitators, water reservoir, tank and office building. The new plant which ran its first crude about January

5, 1924, was a very modern installation for that time. In 1948 and 1949 the biggest construction project since the start of the plant took place. A completely new lube plant, a grease compounding and blending plant and wharf facilities arose from a marsh area. The Smith's Bluff Refinery of 1959 has little left on its grounds to remind what men and mules had accomplished in 1923. The Pure Oil progress at its mid-county installation parallels closely the difference in the 1923 and the 1959 automobile.

Nederland today is the type of quiet peaceful community that the early settlers intended for it to be, a happy haven for the hardworking, home loving people.

In 1940 the city was incorporated and covered an area of a little more than a square mile, with the population of around fifteen hundred. Today the city covers an area of 4.25 square miles, with an estimated population of 10,548.

Nederland is served by the Kansas City Southern Railroad, the Southwest Greyhound Lines, a splendid network of county and state highways and the Jefferson County Airport, providing modern airline service to all parts of the nation. The Neches River is a scant three miles to the north and east of Nederland, with a deepwater outlet through the Gulf of Mexico to the Seven Seas.

Nederland has one of the finest school systems in the country, with an enrollment of 3,622 students in public schools and 263 in parochial, the Nederland Independent School District covers an area of twenty-five square miles.

Nederland has twenty churches with large memberships and modern buildings.

Utilities are furnished by Southwestern Bell Telephone Company, Gulf States Utilities and Southern Union Gas Company.

Nederland has Municipal Government, Mayor and four Councilmen, four full time policemen. And a voluntary and full time Fire Department.

CHAPTER 4

SABINE PASS

Sabine Pass once held high promise of commercial supremacy. Today it is but a graveyard of hopes, a repository of legend. Born of the sea in the early 1800's — her mother was energy and her sire adventure — she flourished into rivalry with New Orleans and Galveston, only to be throttled by capital, crushed by the elements and spurned by the future.

Around her thrives an empire, but Sabine Pass sits to one side of the big parade dreaming indolently of one-time grandeur. Her somnolent ease is disturbed, if at all, by the agonizing cries of ghosts of federal soldiers bewailing their blanket-clad burials beneath her sod ninety-seven years ago.

Only a monument erected to the memory of Lieutenant Dick Dowling and his followers remains to mark the spot where he and his forty-seven Irish dock-wallopers from the wharves of Galveston defeated a force of twenty-two vessels and fifteen thousand men, repulsing a union invasion of Texas. Only scrubby underbrush guards the place where the little band of inspired stevedores won one of the most decisive victories in military history.

And merely a few weed-filled ditches along a wave-washed Mesquite Point bear testimony to man's acceptance of the tingling tales of Jean Lafitte and his pirate gold-doubloons stained with blood and pieces of eight tainted with lust and greed. Only a few persons remain in the Sabine district who can tell you these tales, and in a few more years they too will be gone.

In days of old a wandering minnesinger would have delighted to recite the saga of Sabine Pass. An Edgar Allan Poe, catching the spirit of helpless struggle against wind, water and circumstance, might have struck a ballast worthy of the weird tale. Surely the sterile pages of history texts do it no justice. If you would recapture the atmosphere of the fabled past, you must seek out documentary scraps and legends that have filtered down through the generations.

History reveals that this area's first real estate boom took place in 1839, when the city of Sabine Pass, Republic of Texas, was laid off by the promoters and one thousand shares of stock sold. One share, costing \$250, entitled the holder to proceeds of the sale of the two thousand and sixty lots of the township.

According to information given in the Beaumont Journal of May 25, 1939, a copy of one of these shares is in the possession of the Port Arthur civic club. Bearing the signature of Niles J. Smith, agent, it lists the proprietors as Sam Houston, Phillip Sublette, John Roberts, A. G. Kellogg, George W. Hockley, W. D. Lee, Smith and others. Holders of shares were to draw a proportionate part of the revenues from property sales.

Settling of the area proceeded rapidly. Cargoes were lighted down the Sabine and Neches Rivers through Lake Sabine and on to Sabine Pass, to be loaded on ocean-going vessels. Farming was conducted along the ridge back of the city.

The only actual story of buried treasure in the Sabine Pass area was handed down from a little old lady, named Alvina Gallier. She had come to Sabine Pass at the age of four with her father, William Maas, from Germany.

Mrs. Gallier told of a pirate privateer having come near the mouth of the pass and two or three men came ashore and went to John McGaffey's pioneer home.

"They talked to him, and after a while he borrowed my father's ox team then left. They hauled treasure away all night long. My father said it was money and jewels they had gotten off captured boats.

"There has been a lot of hunting in the pass for this supposed buried treasure which was estimated to be worth a hundred thousand dollars."

According to Mrs. Gallier's story, her father thought it might be buried around Mesquite Point, which is a peninsula out into Lake Sabine from the southern tip of that elongated island formed when the ship canal was cut into the mainland.

Stories of ghosts, haunted houses disappearing in thin air, and weird sounding noise is part of the legend of Sabine Pass. Sabine Pass was undisturbed by these ruminations as it went into the 60's and the War Between the States. When the news reached Sabine Pass, early residents recall that school boys threw their books out the windows and declared a holiday — a manifestation that no doubt has greeted every declaration of war since the beginning of mass education.

When the "Davy Guards" commanded by Lieutenant Dick Dowling, entered Sabine Pass the social life of the town picked up. They were a good looking bunch of Irishmen that Dowling brought over from Galveston docks to build an earthen rampart at the narrowest

part of the pass, and hearts began to flutter under high-bosomed dresses, according to stories told by Mrs. Gallier.

It came on September 8, 1863, the day decided upon by the federal commanders to enter Sabine Pass with the gunboats and transports and land troops for an invasion of Texas. Official records of both sides concerning the conflict are contained in a series of volumes of naval activities during the War Between the States. Reports of the Union officers blame the failure of the federal thrust on a miscarriage of plans or a surprise attack the day before, and intimate the rapidity and accuracy of fire from Dowling's cannon gave them the impression the garrison was much stronger than it actually was. Most interesting to Texans is Lieutenant Dowling's report on the battle. It follows:

"On Monday morning about two o'clock, the sentinel informed me the enemy were signaling, and fearing an attack, I ordered all the guns at the fort manned and remained in that position until daylight, at which time there were two steamers, evidently sounding for the channel on the bar; a large frigate outside. They remained all day at work, but during the evening were reinforced to the number of twenty-two vessels of different classes.

"On the morning of the eighth, the United States gunboat Clifton anchored opposite the lighthouse, and fired twenty-six shells at the fort, most of which passed a little over or fell short; all, however, in excellent range, one shell being landed on the works and another, striking the south angle of the fort, without doing any material damage.

"During this time we had not replied by a single shot. All was quiet until eleven o'clock, at which time

the gunboat Uncle Ben stemmed down near the fort. The United States gunboat Sachem opened on her with a thirty-pounder Parrot gun. She fired three shots all passing over the fort and missing the Ben.

"The whole fleet then drew off and remained out of range until 3:40 o'clock, when the Sachem and Arizona stemmed into line up the channel, the Clifton and one boat, name unknown, remaining at the junction of two former boats to approach within twelve hundred yards, when I opened fire with the whole of my battery on the Sachem which after the third or fourth round hoisted the white flag, one of the shots passing through her stem drum.

"The Clifton, in the meantime has attempted to pass up through the Texas channel, but, receiving a shot which carried away her tiller rope, she became unmanageable, and grounded about five hundred yards below the fort, which enabled me to concentrate all my guns on her.

"She withstood our fire some twenty-five minutes when she also hoisted a white flag.

"During the time she was aground she used grape, and her sharpshooters poured an incessant shower of Minnie balls into the works. The fight lasted from the time I fired the first gun until the boat surrendered; that was about three-quarters of an hour.

"I immediately boarded the captured Clifton, and proceeded to inspect her magazine, accompanied by one of the ship's officers, and discovered it safe and well stocked with ordinance stores. I did not visit the magazine of the Sachem in consequence of not having any small boats to board her with. The C. S. Gunboat Uncle Ben stemmed down to the Sachem and towed her into the wharf.

"Thus it will be seen we captured with forty-seven men, two gunboats mounting thirteen guns of the heaviest caliber and about three hundred and fifty prisoners. All my men behaved like heroes; not a man flinched from his post. Our motto was 'victory or death'." With the capture of two of their vessels, the federal force withdrew and the threat of an invasion of Texas was over.

Descendants of Sabine Pass pioneers remember the conflict. Mrs. R. B. Pace watched the battle from a housetop as a girl of six. She recalls the family owned a barrel of flour — then a precious substance with a value of \$100.00 a barrel. Yet the family unhesitatingly broke the barrel to use the flour as an application to the burns of the federal soldiers who were injured by the Sachem's men exploding boilers. The wounded men were rolled in the flour and wrapped in sheets.

The wounded who died were buried at Mesquite Point. The remainder were taken to Beaumont where a yellow fever epidemic broke out among them accounting for several others. These lie buried under the present K.C.S. tracks there, near the station old timers say.

A. H. Granger, life-time resident of Sabine Pass, recalls that his father was the first citizen to reach the fort after the battle, carrying a five-gallon of milk on horseback to the soldiers.

Sabine Pass, according to old timers, population neared the five thousand mark during the 60's and 70's. It was an important cotton and cattle concentration center.

The Eastern-Texas Railroad Company began plans for a road from Sabine Pass to Nacogdoches. The line developed as far as Beaumont, and were sold under

the hammer for \$1000.00 The Kountz brothers — capitalists who were to gain control of the entire area — bought the franchise and by 1876 completed the road on to Rockland. Ten years later the line was sold to the Southern Pacific.

If the coming events cast their shadows before, then the little cluster of homesteads on Lake Sabine that made up Aurora — the forerunner of Port Arthur — might be considered an ominous development in the life of Sabine Pass, but that lusty community gave little thought to the few settlers at the head of the lake.

They little reckoned that a port would be established at the spot which would cause a decline of Sabine Pass. But with the appearance of Stilwell in 1896 considerable excitement was created in the district when he announced that he was seeking the ideal place for a railroad terminus and port. The Kountz brothers believed they would of necessity select Sabine. Laboring under such an impression, these capitalists who controlled the area quoted a price which Stilwell considered unreasonable.

Scouting around, he came across the elevated area at the head of the lake where the farmhouse of Sam Lee marked the little settlement of Aurora. Stilwell, the dreamer, visioned the possibilities—he would build his city inland and bring the deep water to it. Stilwell, purchased 53,000 acres of land at the head of the lake from the McFadden-Weiss and Kyle land interests and organized the Port Arthur Land and Township Company in preparation for one the most brilliant exploitation campaigns in American railway development history, he put in motion the gradual eclipse of Sabine Pass.

The Kountz brothers conducted a desperate, but losing fight. They drew first blood by prevailing on the Secretary of War to halt Stilwell's plan for dredging a channel up to Port Arthur through Lake Sabine, on the grounds that silt stirred up by dredges would be carried down and deposited in the Sabine Pass channel, filling it.

Stilwell countered by deciding to dredge the channel inland and his big dredges figuratively had to cut their way through a total of thirty-nine injunction suits before they could complete the water route, records show. But when the tidewater from the Gulf met the railroad from Kansas City, the importance of Sabine Pass faded rapidly.

Organizing the new town of Sabine about two miles below Sabine Pass, the promoters erected the big Winsor Hotel, and sought to outbuild Stilwell but to no avail. Misfortunes piled on one another. A storm had struck the town in 1886. Another lashed it in 1900 and still another in 1915. Various industries that had made their home at Sabine Pass moved away and with them many of the residents.

Today Sabine Pass is only a memorial to the heroes who so valiantly defended its fort and to the pioneers who established it.

BURIED TREASURE

This is another version of the buried treasure at Sabine Pass, as given by Kathleen Welch, a great-granddaughter of John McGaffy. As the story goes, an Irishman by the name of John McGaffy was lured to this coastal region by tall Texas tales of open range and long-horned cattle, while Texas was still a republic.

He and his wife settled on Sabine Pass in what is

now Jefferson County on land from Spanish grant. He built a cabin on Shell Ridge—an inland bar a few miles long. This ridge served as a protection from the gulf storms that periodically swept in over the country.

The cabin was the only habitation for miles up and down the lonely coast. The famous White ranch, 25 miles to the east, was the nearest neighbor. At this early date, these ranchers were finding it profitable to raise cattle for Louisiana markets.

McGaffy began to build his herd of long-horned cattle, until he had several hundred head, which he and a few faithful Negro slaves drove to the New Orleans market.

As the story goes, Mr. McGaffy was returning from New Orleans with the cattle sale money in his saddlebag and had started back to Sabine Pass on horseback.

Late in the evening, when they were nearing Franklin, Louisiana, he complained of feeling queer.

They struck a gallop. When they reached an inn, the owner was away, but his wife came out. Seeing the sick man, she helped the Negro get Mr. McGaffy down from his saddle and helped him onto the gallery, where she lay him down on a pallet. He died, while she was bathing his face with camphor. He was buried there in the Evangeline country, so the story goes, in 1860.

The old Negro rode on back to Sabine Pass with the cattle money in his saddlebag, and broke the news to Mrs. McGaffy. Carrying her baby in her lap, while the old Negro carried the other child on his saddle in front of him, she rode to her husband's grave.

After erecting a tombstone on his grave with proper identification, she returned to Shell Ridge. She re-invested some of her money in cattle. She continued to

live in Shell Ridge until her death. The children grew up and married in the county which became populated before she died. She is buried in Sabine Pass.

Then the only son, Neal McGaffy, took over the estate after the death of his mother. He continued with the cattle business, building the herd and making such improvements as was possible in the open country.

He and his wife, Rachel Jane, lived lonely lives; seldom did they see or have visitors. Then one night, while McGaffy was sitting on his front steps gazing at the stars, a stranger called out of the darkness: "I am the captain of a ship out there. My wife died of yellow fever aboard ship. I'd like some help in building a coffin."

"Come in," McGaffy said cordially. Soon, according to stories, the two were at work building a casket by candlelight.

When the captain offered to pay for the service, and Mr. McGaffy refused to accept it, the captain gave Mrs. McGaffy his wife's jewels as a gesture of appreciation for their cordialities, which she accepted gracefully.

Weeks and months went by without the sight of another human. Then once more a stranger appeared out of the darkness. The man gave his name as Carton, and asked for food and lodging for the night. After an early breakfast next morning, the man offered to pay for his keep, but of course, nothing would be accepted. He left without explanation. That night he came again, was again welcomed, fed and bedded. This time he stayed on several weeks without any explanation of his intentions. This action aroused the suspicion of both Mr. and Mrs. McGaffy. The fact

that they had a little cash in the cabin added to their uneasiness.

After the man had been given food and shelter for a whole month, Mr. McGaffy demanded to know his business. The man admitted that his actions would have aroused anybody's suspicions.

"I have been a pirate," the stranger said abruptly. "There were three of us owning a ship. We escaped from LaFitte just before he took headquarters on Galveston Island. We made a good haul out of a ship loaded with Mexican silver and gold. However, the time was running out on such doings and we knew it. We were sailing away to New Orleans, to divide the loot with our men and disband when a hurricane caught us. It swept our masts off and our sail was cut into shreds.

"We drifted in one direction and then in another for days. There were 38 of us, although when the rations of drinking water got so low there was hardly enough to keep alive, half of the men ganged up and mutinied. Some were killed. We had a store of wine, and some of the men broke into it and drank too much, went mad and jumped overboard into the sea.

"Another storm hit us, and it blew us straight in, and our ship grounded at the west end of this ridge that you call Shell Ridge.

"There were only five of us left alive. One of them was another pirate-owner. The third owner had died. We came ashore in a small boat and dug a hole in the sand and got water to drink.

"We dug a big hole on the side of Shell Ridge, next to the gulf. Then we brought in a box from the floundered ship and lowered it into the hole. Next we put the gold and silver into the box. We poured the stuff

in buckets. After we covered up the hole, we drove brass spikes into two drift logs half covered by sand not far from the location."

McGaffey listened without saying a word.

"I've told you everything just as it was so far," the man finally went on. "Three of the men died on the way to New Orleans. Only two of us got there — the surviving partner and myself. Then one night down on the Mississippi levee my partner was stabbed.

"Four years passed since we left and the markers have been washed away or covered up with sand. The wreck of our old boat was gone, not a sign left, and I can't locate the place."

"I will help you and we will find it," Mr. McGaffey answered.

They searched for weeks, digging down in the sand. Occasionally they had their hopes temporarily raised by striking a piece of driftwood, or some object deep underground. Finally the man got discouraged and left for New York, leaving an address through which he could be reached should Mr. McGaffey find the treasure.

Mr. McGaffey went back to tending his herd, forgetting the buried treasure. One morning he went to the beach to haul off driftwood. A recent storm had brought an unusual amount of it. While he was prying one end of a piece of wood out of the sand, he uncovered a slab of lumber. He always saved any piece of lumber he could find. As he worked to get this piece out, he discovered that it was the lid to a box.

Suddenly the thought occurred to him that it might be the treasure buried by the pirate. As he pried the lid off, the thought of "buckets and buckets of stuff" rushed to his mind. As he worked to pull the lid off,

a feeling of uneasiness crept upon him. The more he pulled, the more shaky he got. When he finally jerked the lid off, it was as if a thousand fiery devils jumped at him, knocking him down.

When he finally came to, he rushed home to tell his wife and the faithful slave about the blood money.

Before Mr. McGaffy left with a herd for New Orleans market in the fall, he offered to take his wife to the location of the buried treasure, but she refused. "If that stranger were to come back and be suspicious that you had found the treasure and tried to get me to tell him where it was, I can't tell him if I don't know." She died not knowing where the treasure was buried any more than the stranger calling in the night had known.

The tradition of the treasure she passed down is still told and believed by her descendants. During the course of years, hundreds of men have taken high-priced mineral rods, Spanish dip needles, wiggle sticks, and other instruments at Shell Ridge and prospected all along the ridge. The old historic McGaffy graveyard was not overlooked. On February 25, 1936, the vault of Mrs. Neil McGaffy was broken into and looted—the 55-year-old grave is in the historic ridge cemetery three miles west of Sabine Pass on the gulf. Remnants of the dismembered skeleton were found scattered over the ground and grave. Some had been crudely stacked in a corner of the musty vault. The third finger bone was missing. It is believed that a valuable ring which the ship captain had given her at the time when her husband had helped build the casket of his wife was on that missing finger. The ghoul, it is believed, took the ring, as well as other pieces of jewelry.

Homer Trinker, member of the grand jury, viewed the violated grave, and said that at least three persons must have had part in tearing away the long-sealed cement grave. Several sticks of 2x6-inch lumber evidently employed as levers to lift the lid, were abandoned at the scene.

The remote graveyard, laid out before the Battle of Sabine Pass, which Texas memorialized that year in connection with the Centennial Celebration, is located on the wood-ridge about 100 yards northwest of the beach highway.

Among the descendants of John and Neal McGaffy: Vivian Bromley of Sabine Pass, Texas; Floyd Wiess of Nederland, Texas; Mrs. Lillian Austin of High Island, Texas; L. C. Wiess of Houston, Texas; Mrs. Lucille McGaffy of Dallas, Texas; Neal McGaffy of Alabama; Mrs. Marjorie Granger of Sea Drift, Texas; Mrs. Mary Sittlemire of Galveston, Texas; Birdie Bromley of Aransas Pass, Texas. Homer Niel, only living son of Niel McGaffy, lives in Houston. He is eighty years of age.

Among other descendants are grandchildren of Neal McGaffy. They are: Arnold, a foreman at Gulf Refinery at Port Arthur, Texas; Lindsay Johnson, employee of Sun Oil Company of Sabine Pass; and Mrs. Kathleen Welch of 620 Campus, Beaumont, Texas. The earth and sand of Shell Ridge is still holding hard its treasure, but the search still goes on.

CHAPTER 5

PORT NECHES

The following appeared in the Port Neches Chronicle of Thursday, March 14, 1957.

"PORT NECHES FIRST HISTORY DATES BACK TO 1834

"Town Has Moved Location 3 Times

"For a score or more years before the war between the North and South, sailors on heavily laden cotton schooners sailed back and forth between Beaumont and Galveston along the cypress covered banks of the Neches river, never dreaming that some day there would be a thriving town called Por Neches.

"On November 6, 1834, Joseph Grigsby, a citizen of the United States, applied to the land commissioner of the Lorenzo de Gavilla Colonizing company for permission to bring his wife and four children to settle on seventeen acres of land located on the Neches river.

GRIGSBY'S GRANT

"Grigsby was granted the land where the Texas Company now stands, with the understanding that he settle within a year. He named it Grigsby's Bluff and built a landing where 'side wheeler' type boats occasionally stopped.

"When in 1841, Grigsby died, his wife was unable to administer his estate according to terms of his will because his land had to be auctioned off in pieces to pay his many debts. Discouraged, she resigned as administrator and moved to New Orleans.

"However, a new executor, George Smyth, was appointed because he had bought one of the largest blocks, a thousand acres at 25 cents an acre. He cleared all debts by 1850.

“When in recent years the bodies of Grigsby and other members of his family were removed from the family burial plot under the huge pecan trees on the present Texas Company site, all traces of the family were lost. This is the only family of early settlers not having descendants living in Port Neches today.

DATE REMILY

“The family of Date Remily, one of the early Port Neches school teachers, fared better. This original house of cypress built at Fig Tree landing still stands, although it has been remodeled. It was moved in 1945 to Riverside Terrace where it is now known as the Gibson place.

“In 1860 George Gentz moved to Grigsby’s Bluff and settled about two miles south of the present Texas Company; the land then doubled in value to 50 cents an acre. He bought about 200 acres of land and built a frame residence at the lower end of what is now Block Street. In 1865, the Ranchord family built the third house in the settlement called Grigsby’s.

“1870 saw a land boom hit Grigsby’s Bluff; land sold for \$1 an acre. Many new families moved in, including the Merrimans, the Keiths, the Smiths and the Berrys. The Berrys settled where the Pure Oil company now is located; the Smiths in the section of Port Neches that is now called “New Town”; the Keiths near the present site of the Texas Company, and the Block family bought the newly built Gentz home.

“Until 1895 most of the area that now constitutes Port Neches was covered with trees and small meadows between the thin grove of trees. Deer, fox, wolves, and hogs were prevalent, especially in the marshy cypress groves near the river.

FARMING

"The new families cleared the land into fairly large farms, on which they raised corn, rice and potatoes.

"Each family originally had its own private burial ground. The Block family gave the cemetery for community use. Originally called Block cemetery, it is now called Oak Bluff Memorial park. The Merriman and Smith families' burial plots are no longer in use but the families have protected them.

"In 1880 the first school was begun. This building was also used as the community meeting place. Church services were held here with circuit preachers from Beaumont doing the preaching. There were no stores at this time. The people went to the small settlement of Beaumont by horseback, wagon or boat. This was a long, dangerous trip.

"In 1880 the population was about 50 inhabitants, and in 1895 about 150.

INDIAN LAND

"It is evident that at one time Indians lived around Port Neches. An Indian mound was found at the present site of the Texas Company. It was built of clam shells, shaped in a square with walls from eight to ten feet high.

"Many arrowheads and other relics were found at the mound. Other evidence of Indian occupancy of this area have been found on the Orange side of the Neches river. Skeletons and Indian relics have been found there.

"In 1902 the Central Asphalt company erected an asphalt plant where the present Texas Company plant stands. They laid out a townsite and called it Port Neches after the river. This was a 'refinery settle-

ment', east of the plant, containing several stores and houses for the plant's employees.

TEXAS COMPANY PURCHASE

"In 1906 the Texas Company purchased the company, remodeled the plant and made many improvements for the benefit of the workers and community. In the meantime, the town of Port Neches was enlarging rapidly and was gradually moving westward.

"There was no post office until the Texas Company established one in their office in 1906. It remained there until 1917 when it was moved to 'Old Town.' In 1932, it was moved to 'New Town.' In 1949, the post office was moved to its present location on the corner of Dallas and Port Neches Avenue.

"In 1913 the first business house was erected in what is called 'Old Town.' Following closely on its heels were several other business houses and residences.

"In 1917 another step was taken in the westward move of the city. The first fire-proof building was built in 'New Town' by W. M. Meeker. This marked the beginning of the greatest period of progress in Port Neches.

TELEPHONE INSTALLED

"In 1921, the Southwestern Bell Telephone company installed a telephone system in Port Neches. From the beginning of the system to 1923 Mrs. Mary Montgomery was the operator.

"Mrs. Minnie Howard took charge in 1923 to remain until October 16, 1948 when the dial system was installed. In early days only the managers were paid by the telephone company; the managers were required to pay their own helpers.

"In 1927 both sides of Port Neches, 'Old Town' and 'New Town' incorporated. In 1929 bonds were voted for a water and sewer system, which was finished in 1930 along with a modern filtration plant.

"The city established the fire department in 1931. It consisted of a modern six-cylinder Chevrolet pump. The station was a small truck equipped with ladders and tin building with a large siren on top."

The following was also taken from the Port Neches Chronicle.

CHINABERRY BANK

"According to old-timers, the first bank of Port Neches was actually a Chinaberry tree. Before an established bank of Port Neches came into being, a man appointed as treasury of a certain organization, and entrusted with \$175,000 made some sacks of waterproof cloth, wrapped the money in them. One night he climbed to the top of his Chinaberry tree in his back yard and tied the money on the branches among the thick foliage where it stayed without discovery."

CHAPTER 6

CHINA

Approximately seventy-five years ago the thriving little community now known as China of about one thousand energetic citizens was nothing more than swamps and prairie land. Descendants of pioneers remember stories told by their forefathers of having been lulled to sleep by the howls of wolves and coyotes. Looking back these seventy-five years of struggling

in this bare wilderness, one wonders that China ever made the progress that it has. This progress is due to the courageous efforts of a few hardy pioneers who braved the adversities and conquered these uninhabited prairies.

The Nash Brothers were among the first to settle on a large tract of land; they were attracted to this locality by wide open range and good grazing land. A few years later came the West family, also a few others.

Soon a depot and post office were built on the Southern Pacific line and the little community became known as "Nashland," so named for its original founders, the Nash family. Upon migrating to this community, the West family pushed further North along the bank of Pine Island Bayou on the Old Spanish Trail; there they settled (as squatters) on a large tract of land known as the "Yokum Survey." The name is said to be derived from a desperado named Yokum who once lived there. Tradition has it that this desperado operated a hostelry (or inn) on the Old Spanish Trail, and men driving herds of cattle from West Texas to Louisiana markets were robbed and killed; and the money buried there along the banks of the bayou. Finally Yokum was apprehended and killed by some of the cattle drivers who laid watch for him.

Information concerning the buried treasure was given by the negro cook at the inn after Yokum's death. The cook couldn't give the exact location of this supposed buried treasure, but he was certain it was close by the inn. There has been a considerable amount of digging all along the banks of the bayou for this treasure, which was estimated to be worth several hundred thousand dollars.

Stories of ghosts, a two-headed man, and strange, weird sounds are part of the legend. Many claims have been made to the effect that old iron pots with money rings, or a box or a brick vault was found, but as the story goes, no money.

This survey came to be known as Westbury (or Westberry), named for the West family and groves of China trees.

A few years later the Old Spanish Trail was rerouted a little farther South, going through Nashland. By this time a few more families had settled there, and the prairie had taken the resemblance of a little community, which came to be known as China because of groves of Chinaberrie trees.

Then there soon began to appear little patches of Providence rice here and there in the low places. Mrs. A. B. Abisher, a resident of the community for many years, remembers that her father, J. T. Hudspeth, was one of the first to plant Providence rice in the area. Rainfall was ample and a good crop was made, she recalls.

With the building of an irrigation canal in the early 1900's, rice farming became a big business. Large acreages were cultivated by ox teams, which were soon replaced by mule's power. Large irrigation and pumping plants were erected, and the once waste and worthless prairie lands sprang into verdant rice fields.

Mr. Fremont D. McDermand is likely one of the oldest active large scale rice farmers in the area. In spite of his ninety-one years, which he celebrated on December 5, 1959, he is still cultivating four hundred acres of rice yearly. A native of Nebraska, Mr. McDermand came to Jefferson County in 1899, and settled in China in 1903. His wife died in 1946. He lives in

the old family home with his daughter, Miss Lucille McDermand, a former teacher.

Mr. Latney B. Leach came to China in 1902, married Miss Florence Bogan from Kentucky. He has for some years past planted an average of five hundred acres of rice annually. Mr. Leach has worked both with the Rice Growers' Association, and has been a factor in the development of the rice industry in this section as well as schools and churches.

The W. E. Bogan family is another old family who settled in the China community at the turn of the century. He and his family contributed much to the welfare and building of the community. W. E. Bogan married Della Turner, and they have three daughters.

J. R. Blanch came to this area in 1893, buying three hundred and twenty acres of land at \$2.00 an acre, and planting the land to rice. He also stocked a few cattle, and at the time of his death was one of the largest stock farmers in the area, owning three thousand acres of land. A son, J. C., and daughter, Mrs. Edward J. Halfacre, make their home in the old homestead in China.

To name a few of these pioneers who came to the community in the late 1800's and early 1900's were: Leach, Turner, Bogan, Bussy, Conklin, Price, Hudspeth, McDermand, Blanch, Abisher, Clark, East, and others.

The first school building was a one-room structure built in the late 1800's. The three R's were taught to students ranging in age from six years on. Then the first place of worship was built about the same time. The land was donated by George H. East on the property now owned by Lorenza Daigle in the Sophie Dean Survey. The whole community was shocked when Rev-

erend T. H. Feagin was instantly killed by lightning while holding service July 3, 1908, in this little church. He had been assisting the regular pastor, Reverend George Cook, for several days in a protracted meeting which was said to have been increasing in interest with each service.

At the night service at the close of his sermon, lightning struck the stove flue of the building, jumping to the wire that connected gasoline to the lamp directly under which he stood, and killed him instantly.

DR. N. E. LAIDACKER HORSE AND BUGGY DOCTOR

Dr. Nelson E. Laidacker of Watsontown, Pennsylvania, and his wife, the former Ada Mannan of Eminence, Indiana, came to Texas about 1901. He practiced in Houston, Texas before going to China, Texas in 1902. Dr. and Mrs. Laidacker were both graduates of DePauw University of Greencastle, Indiana; Miss Mannan taught school after graduation and Mr. Laidacker went to the Indiana University, of Indianapolis, Indiana and received both his Master's and Doctor's degrees there. He served in the medical corps during the Spanish-American War and was stationed in Cuba; on his return to the United States he and Miss Mannan were married.

When he moved to China, Dr. Laidacker was the only physician in that area. The section was sparsely populated and he made his calls on horseback or driving a span of handsome horses which he had purchased from A. H. Boyt, who was to become the first president of the American Rice Growers' Association in Beaumont. There were no roads in that section in those days, the trips being made over the open prairie.

As soon as automobiles came out, Dr. Laidacker secured one, owning the first motor-driven vehicle in China. He hired a man to teach him to drive and had him ride with him for several weeks before he would trust himself to drive alone.

The veteran physician was one in a million in one respect. He never kept a record of the calls he made nor of the patients he saw in his office. People paid him as they could. During the depression patients often brought squirrels, eggs, chickens, berries or vegetables when they came for treatment or for medicine.

Dr. Laidacker was said not only to have made no demands for his time when in consultation, but when he felt that his patients needed medicine he filled prescriptions and gave them the medicine. He was a licensed pharmacist and operated a drug store in connection with his office. He prescribed for his patients and filled the prescriptions. He had patients who came for many miles to consult him and to secure treatment.

The veteran doctor kept at his work constantly. He was up at six o'clock seeing patients, and he never closed his office before ten o'clock at night. Sunday too, was an especially hard day, because in the farming community, many persons who were not seriously ill worked through the week and went to see their physician on Sunday. Frequently as many as twenty cars at one time were parked around the old doctor's office on Sunday. There was scarcely an hour of the day even during the week when there was not from ten to a dozen cars parked around the place, while patients waited their turn inside his office. He kept a regular menagerie, including deer, squirrels, etc., for the entertainment of the patients while they waited. Often they brought their lunches and ate them under the big

shade trees in the yard, for often their wait was a long one due to the large number of patients and the doctor's love to visit with them.

Though interested only in the practice of medicine, because of this feeling that those who were ill should be treated whether they had money or not and also because he never pushed collections, the money Dr. Laidacker acquired came from real estate dealings and oil leases.

Until the last days of his life, Dr. Laidacker kept abreast of the times and kept informed about the changes in the methods of treatment of disease. He had a vast library in the building where he operated his drug store and maintained his offices. More than two thousand volumes of medical works were in the library and he read and studied them constantly.

He was very civic minded, working with and contributing to the many projects of the community; He served on the local school board.

His wife, Ada, died in 1918 and in 1921 he married Anna Pevito of Nome, Texas. She still lives in China and so do his three children: Mrs. Ivan Seaberg, Mrs. R. B. Mackan, and Nelson W. Laidacker.

CHAPTER 7

PIONEER FAMILIES

A mistake made by the late H. A. Perlstein a century ago turned out to be a great blessing to both himself and the community. He achieved success in a new country, and as an expression of appreciation for that opportunity, he contributed most vitally to its developments.

At fifteen years of age, H. A. Perlstein, armed with courage and determination, set sail for America from Lithuania. His native land, once the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, later a part of Poland, was under Russian dominance when he was born in 1869, following the country's partition by Poland and the Czar.

He made his way to Houston, Texas, where an uncle was established in a blacksmith business. His uncle ran away from his native Russia as a boy, because he disliked his step-mother, and made his way to America on a sailing vessel. He had written to his nephew urging him to come and take advantage of the opportunities that were available here in the United States.

Upon arriving in America, Mr. Perlstein worked for his uncle in his blacksmith shop until he learned the trade. He then acquired his own shop, which he operated for five years on the corner of San Jacinto and Congress Streets. After that length of time in Houston, Mr. Perlstein began to look for expansion, as he felt there was no chance in Houston due to the crowded field. He decided on the advice of his uncle to go to Orange.

Mr. Perlstein's description of Beaumont and the fortunate mistake he made as told to the Beaumont Enterprise October 1, 1939, by H. A. Perlstein:

"On being told that Orange was a much better town than Beaumont, for it had one more sawmill in it, I sold my shop in Houston, started for Orange. The train left Houston about 10:30 at night, and around 1:00 or 1:30 in the morning, the train had stopped and being sleepy and thinking I had arrived in Orange, I got off the train and before locating myself, the train pulled out and left me in the town of Beaumont around two o'clock in the morning.

"When the train pulled out, there were no lights except in a little shanty across the street, where the Cole Lumber Company retail store now is, called the "Little House That Jack Built," and I went there for a cup of coffee, and it was there I learned that I was in Beaumont and not Orange.

"Looking down the tracks toward the river, I saw some lights, about where the Crystal Ice Company now is, where they made ice and pumped water, and I walked down to the plant. Across the track was the stand pipe. This was not drinking water, as that came from Cypress Cisterns. As I was walking back again, it had started getting daylight and I could see things.

OLD LANDMARKS

"Going north across the railroad was a big ditch with a bridge across it. There were a few business houses and a laundry just across the ditch. Turning west on the right side of the street were a couple of dwellings. Across on the corner was the V. Wiess dwelling and beyond that was the First National Bank with the V. Wiess office in the back, and on the corner was a grocery store. On the next corner, westward, there was a saloon run by the Ogden Brothers, and next to it was Chief John Morris' place, then another business house.

"Just back of these places on Main Street was the telegraph office and across the street were small business houses. Next was a dry goods store run by Henry Solinsky.

"Continuing west on Crockett Street was a grocery store run by a Mr. Welch and next to him was the Loeb Cigar Store, then small business houses and Wilson Hardware Company. On the other corner was the M.

Hecht Dry Goods Store. There was nothing north on Pearl Street after the Hecht store except a small tin shop and livery stable and the Dr. C. Y. Thompson dwelling where the old post office was.

GOODHUE BLOCK

"Continuing on Crockett Street were business houses known as the Goodhue Block and then the Leon R. Levy store mentioned before. Next to Levy's Store was a small jewelry store and then nothing else until you came to the Crosby Hotel, which was the only hotel at that time, and it was a large frame building standing where the Crosby Hotel now is.

"Back of the Crosby on Orleans Street was the opera house. North of that on the corner was an elevated cottage where Colonel Goodhue lived. From there on was nothing but small dwellings. McFaddin lived where the present post office is, on the corner of Liberty and Willow Streets, but neither Willow nor Broadway were open then.

"Going back to Main and Tevis Streets, there was a three-story building under construction on the corner, which was known as the Knights of Pythias Hall and this building is still standing. South of Main Street, what is called the triangle, were a lot of small buildings occupied by various concerns. That brought me back to the railroad.

"Crossing west on Main Street, Pittman and Mac-kan ran a gent's furnishing store next to the railroad. Then just north of that on Main Street was Dr. Kyle's office and on the corner was a two-story residence converted into a business house.

"Going west on Crockett Street again, but on the south side were small business houses. Coleman had a

shoe shop and Cramer had a little confectionery shop. Next to that was a restaurant then a barber shop owned by Sollider. On the Ogden corner, which was then the most popular corner in town and also across from the depot, Ogden Brothers had another saloon. There was nothing north on Pearl Street on the west side of the street after Levy's Store.

"Turning south on Pearl across the railroad from the Ogden corner was the Little House That Jack Built and several little frame buildings, but nothing much until you reached Bowie Street. On the corner of Bowie and Pearl was a two-story building with the Enterprise occupying the downstairs portion and the Temperance Hall upstairs.

CITY MARKET

"Next to the Enterprise on Bowie Street was the City Market run by Jack Coward. Beyond the Enterprise building on Pearl Street was a small barbecue stand run by a Negro, and next to that was the blacksmith's shop with the Masonic Lodge upstairs, where the Thames Drug Store now stands. On the corner now occupied by Kress, was nothing but a lot of gum trees used to hitch horses.

"Still going south on Pearl across Fannin Street was a small Negro dwelling which occupied 120 feet on Pearl Street, and there was nothing between that and the frame Baptist Church on the corner of Pearl and Forsythe Streets. Across Forsythe Street was the park, known then as the Tevis Park but later changed to the Keith Park.

"Crossing over to the west side of Pearl Street, on the corner of Pearl and Wall was the Bordages residence and coming back north on Pearl next to the Bor-

dages residence was the same building that is now standing, where a Mrs. Nash operated a boarding house. Then next the Lanier dwelling. The next 120 feet were taken up by a little Negro dwelling whose name was Higgins.

KEITH HOME

“Across the street where the White House now stands was the J. Frank Keith home. Next was the Alexander block with small dwellings. Across the street where Baker Shoe Store now is, was a small dwelling occupied by Mrs. Jarrett, and next to it were vacant lots.

“On the corner where J. C. Penney’s store is, was a livery stable and across the street from that where Walgreen’s is, was a small business house and further down in the block was the Schwartz Dry Goods Store.

“There was an open ditch with a little bridge with hand rails on it, leading back to the depot.

CATHOLIC CHURCH

“Down along the left side of the railroad tracks to Orleans Street was the small Nelson dwelling on the corner, and next to that was another small dwelling and on the corner where the First National Bank now stands was the Catholic Church. Going south on Orleans Street on the east side was a dwelling and all along were dwellings, to the corner now occupied by the San Jacinto Building where the city marshal, Bill Langham, lived.

“Alexander owned the next half block where Hotel Beaumont is, and there was nothing else up to Forsythe Street. Crossing Orleans and going north again was a little church and parsonage, then some small dwellings all around.

"On the corner of Bowie and Orleans Streets, was a foundry and machine shop, where the American National Bank Building is. North of that on Orleans Street was the Beaumont house owned by Seibert. It ran away back to Crockett Street, and Crockett was not opened.

VAN WARMER PASTURE

"Back of the foundry was the Van Warmer pasture, from the railroad to Wall Street.

"Going back to the east side of Main Street and going south across the railroad was nothing except the Texas Tram and Lumber Company, with a commissary where the parking lot now is, with their offices on the second floor. Next was the Van Warmer homestead, in sort of a triangle. Then small dwellings on the east of Main Street to the next corner. And then the Ogden homestead, which was a large two-story house, occupying the entire next block. Then was the property where the Nancy Tevis Market, now City Market, is, but it was still vacant.

"Next across the street was the Beaumont Lumber Company sawmill, which ran on to the river. Crossing to the west side of Main Street was the Courthouse, which at that time was a large, two-story frame building.

LUMBER OFFICES

"Continuing north on Main Street was a two-story dwelling on the corner and then the Beaumont Lumber Company offices and store. Milam Street was opened out to the Beaumont Lumber Company yards which were about five or six blocks west.

"Continuing north on Main Street and crossing the street were dwellings up to the park. A. Delaune's

dwelling was on the corner where the city police station now is. Across Forsythe Street on Main, was a gristmill run by Broussard and Price. Then further down was the Caswell's dwelling. Across Fannin Street on Main, where the Reed Company is, was the Methodist Church and next to that was a market run by Hebert Brothers. From there on to the railroad on Main Street was nothing.

"The Grisby house was on Bowie Street between Main and Pearl. At that time the Texas Tram and Lumber Company had their tram running along Bowie Street from the mill to the lumber yards and planer in the Van Warmer pasture.

CREOSOTING FIRM

"Going north on Pine Street were dwellings on both sides to the Reliance Lumber Company yards and planer. Next to the Reliance mill was the Long Shingle Mill, where the International Company is.

"That is what I found fifty years ago when I came to Beaumont. There were no concrete sidewalks, and only a few planks laid down for sidewalks; no paved streets; no electric lights, except a very few arc lights. The drinking water had to be boiled before drinking, as it stood in cisterns and some of them were not even covered. There was no drainage, and on account of the mosquitoes we had to sleep under bars, and still had the mosquitoes to contend with early in the mornings after getting up.

"The next day I looked for a location, and I found a man everyone called "Uncle Dick" Ridley. He had been here about twenty years, owned the blacksmith's shop. In the front of the shop, where Thames Drug Store is, was a saddle shop owned by Charlie Burnett.

SHOP BOUGHT

"I told Mr. Burnett my intentions and he stated that Uncle Ridley wanted to sell out and I had a good opportunity to buy him out. He explained to him that I was interested in buying out his blacksmith shop, and I made a trade with Mr. Ridley to buy him out. We agreed on the price of materials he had on hand and the price of the tools had to be agreed on between us.

"That is how I happened to be in Beaumont, and the people who have been here during and after fifty years know me.

"The population of Beaumont in August, 1889, was about 3500, and I am glad that the city has grown and prospered during this fifty years.

"I am sure my memories of fifty years ago should be interesting to the old people of Beaumont as well as the young ones."

After establishing himself in the blacksmith business, Mr. Perlstein was married in 1893, in Houston to Miss Mamie Gordon, a native of Poland. She came to Chicago as a small girl. Later she went to Houston where she met and married Mr. Perlstein.

Three years later they built the home they lived in until their death. The picturesque twelve-room steeped home was built on Liberty Avenue, next to where the post office now is. It was then out in the outskirts of town, and mules bogging down in front of the house were very common.

Three daughters were born, romped and grew into adulthood within the walls of this beautiful old home.

Mrs. Eleanor Perlstein Weinbaum, the daughter who lives in Beaumont and who is now manager of the Perlstein estate, has cherished memories of her happy childhood days in the old home. She watched sadly the

disassembling of the home in 1949. A memorable souvenir of her father's blacksmith days was found when the house was being torn down.

It was a worn old horseshoe which the workmen on the job found and gave to Mrs. Weinbaum. Mrs. Weinbaum's grandson is now the proud possessor of the horseshoe, which he fashioned into a paper weight, with the inscription, "From the first horse shod by my grandfather."

Mrs. Perlstein was as great as her husband, she shared his interest in business and civic growth of the city and aided his rise from an humble beginning to one of the outstanding business and real estate development and leader in the community.

From a meager beginning, this immigrant boy arose from poverty and obscurity to prosperity and prominence. Mr. Perlstein has been identified with almost every civic movement which affected his community. His philanthropies were many and he gave liberally of his energies as well as his wealth to the many activities. To mention a few of which he was an ardent supporter are: Boy's Haven, a home for homeless boys — Homes for the Aged, The Municipal Hospital for the indigents of the city. He was a member of its Board of Directors for five years, a member of the Masonic Lodge and organizer of Community Chest, and of course, his church was foremost in his mind. In 1947, Mr. Perlstein was the recipient of the coveted Golden Deeds Award from the Exchange Club of Beaumont. His selection as the winner of such an award speaks for itself, of the deeds of kindness rendered by Mr. Perlstein.

He was asked once by an admirer what did he attribute to his success. His answer was: "Common horse

sense, hard work, thrift and implicit faith in God."

Among the leading families of Jefferson County whose credit is due for the progress and prosperity is the Wiess family. World rover, Simon Wiess, lured to peace on banks of Neches River during early days of Texas. He founded an industry center with the erection of his homestead back in 1840. The sturdy frame home still stands today a monument to a great pioneer family.

Simon Wiess was born in Warsaw, Poland, January 1, 1800. His father was a merchant who owned a fleet of ships on the Mediterranean Sea. Simon was of an adventuresome nature, as his chart in the Masonic shows. In Constantinople in 1825, Mr. Wiess became a Royal Arch Mason. By February 22, 1828, he turned up in Boston, Massachusetts, visiting the Mount Lebanon Lodge, but by August of the same year, he was enjoying the fraternal welcome of Masons in Santo Domingo, going to Barbadoes, West Indies, to visit Albion Lodge No. 333. The chart locates him before the amity lodge on the registry of the Right Worshipful G. L. of Ireland May 9, 1829, and in June of the same year he paid his respects to Union Lodge No. 462 at Georgetown, Demarara.

Turning away from the fraternal chart and to the family Bible, a study in genealogy who spoke eight languages fluently, Mr. Wiess found his way to Natchitoches, Louisiana, in January, 1836, to marry Miss Margaret Sturrock, of pure Scottish lineage and residence in this country for only six years. Before the turn of the year, Mr. Wiess and his bride are found at Nacogdoches, Texas, established on a trading post.

While residing there in a log cabin their first child, a daughter, was born May 14, 1837. She was named

Pauline for the "Little Corsican's" sister. Wiess, with his family, left again to float down the Neches River on a keel boat bearing the first cotton ever transported down the stream to Sabine Pass, on the Gulf. They disembarked at Grisby' Bluff on the river banks where he established a mercantile business for four years, and then came to what is now Beaumont. He operated a merchandise business at what afterwards became known as the old Herring place located on the river front.

He made the hazardous trip down the Neches River on a keel boat to New Orleans to bring back goods for his business. On one of these trips he met William Herring, who returned with him, clerked in the store, and later purchased the business.

By 1840 Mr. Wiess had found a haven of rest fourteen miles on the banks of the Neches from what is now Beaumont, built his home and remained until his death August 13, 1868.

Here at Wiess Bluff, as the spot came to be known, Simon Wiess' industry and ingenuity caused to flourish an industrial center for the county. He engaged in a large forwarding and receiving business, handling most of the cotton raised in that section. He built wharves and an immense warehouse. Beside his home, he set up a school house, several servant houses and a store. Wagons of nearby settlers stood in rows waiting to load and unload cotton, hides, wood and other produce. A tram road was laid for the carrying of logs to the wharves; steamboats docked amid the cheers of the pioneers who gathered to trade for imported goods.

The Wiess family prospered. Pauline, the eldest and only daughter, while five sons, Napoleon, Mark, Mes-sina, William and Valentine, caused the father to con-

struct an addition to the original home. All of the children became leaders and prosperous residents of the county. Their descendants number some of the best known contributors to the welfare of the county. Among the many gifts to the city of Beaumont which bear the Wiess' name is a beautiful park equipped with wading pool for the children, tables and benches under garland of oak trees where weary shoppers and homeless old men may linger comfortably in the shade. One of the main city streets is named for this pioneer family, as well as many other establishments.

The women folk of the Wiess family agree that Margaret Sturrock Wiess, was as great as Simon and influenced his success in life. An Obituary written at the time of her death, May 17, 1881, by E. L. Armstrong and published in a Volume called "The Indian Wars and Pioneers of Texas," is a testimonial of her many excellencies of character. This old record gives an account of coming to Texas in the early days, during the struggle for independence, and of her rare qualities. She was fully equal to the emergencies of life, the embodiment of kindness, guiding her children by the law of love. Their success in life is attributed to the care and culture imparted at home. She was intimately acquainted with General Sam Houston and other noted men of the day. Pauline Wiess married Abel Coffin. For a short time lived at Sabine Pass where Mr. Coffin was engaged in hardware business. He was one of the defenders of that port when the federal gunboats stem into the pass so proudly that September day and limped out so forlornly a few hours later. To them one son, Arthur W., was born, who is survived by a son Arthur W., the latter making his home at Wiess Bluff.

Pauline Wiess Coffin, moved to the Bluff and remained there in the old homestead home until her death. During her life time, which extended to 1930, the grounds and house were kept in perfect repair. Since her death the small empire of Simon Wiess stands more as a skeleton. The furnishings, mostly handmade and handcarved, have been distributed among relatives. Records say pine carved nails were used and rope woven back and forth served as springs for the four-post beds, crowned with high canopies. A huge grandfather clock which has ticked its way from London over a hundred years ago had rested in the old Wiess homestead until Pauline's death. Mrs. W. W. Kyle, a granddaughter of Simon Wiess, who resides at 1530 Sabine Pass, Beaumont, Texas, is the proud possessor of the clock which keeps perfect time today.

According to a related story by Pauline Wiess Coffin in Beaumont Enterprise of July 3, 1917, Texas in those early days was wild and fierce.

Recalling how they lived in Texas when Beaumont was nothing but a few huts; when whoops of Indians blended with the thud of their oars in the water of the Neches; when the buffalo and bear nosed around the back door of their home:

Pauline recounted many interesting details of these first days to an Enterprise reporter when she was in Beaumont that week to attend the funeral of her youngest brother, Messina Wiess.

Wiess Bluff was a busy place in those days. Farmers bringing their cotton to load on boats and securing provisions from the Wiess' store. Three steamboats and thirty teams with Mexican drivers was no uncommon sight at the Bluff, Mrs. Coffin stated.

The old Wiess home was the mecca for many friends who went there to enjoy the hospitality. Several orphans were adopted and nieces and nephews taken to bring up.

Contrasting the price then and now, Mrs. Coffin declared that it cost her father \$18.00 to get a nine miles road cut out with a jack knife connecting their homeplace with the road at Pine Island Bayou and that her mother was the first woman to ride horseback on the new road. Then it cost \$2.50 to make the trip to Sabine Pass, with meals included, and she recalled on one occasion, that the steamboat was held up on a sandbar and an extra supper served without additional cost. It was a neighborly custom for one neighbor to borrow fire from another, in case he had no steel and flint handy, and if his went out. Everybody guarded "spunk" almost with their lives. Lard oil lamps were stylish and people molded candles from beeswax.

The country was too sparsely settled to admit of much social activities, but occasionally there was a candy pulling. There were the yearly famous camp meetings which people attended on horseback, ox-cart, on foot and in wagons. It was so far from house to house that visitors were an event, and traveling preachers were especially welcome. Everybody was your friend and neighbor in those days, and travelers who happened along were provided with food and lodging.

A trip to Houston from Wiess Bluff was not undertaken lightly. It being a matter of weeks. Houston was the capital of the republic then; there were a few houses nestled on the banks of Buffalo Bayou.

Galveston was but a group of shacks built of wreckage on a barren island. A terrific storm came along when the East Texas railroad to Houston was being

built and Mr. Wiess, who had invested, lost heavily as did other men of that day.

Mrs. Coffin was a personal friend of Sam Houston. She often told interesting anecdotes of the liberator of Texas which will not be found in books. She remembered hearing her mother tell that General Houston gave the Indians and Mexicans papers privileging them to beg, and how frightened she was an evening when alone she heard the shutters rattle, then saw an Indian's arm stuck through waving one of the papers.

All the women hereabouts wore homespun. Mr. Wiess being a merchant would bring his wife home dress patterns from New Orleans but not wanting to be different she wore dresses from cloth she spun and wove herself up to the time of the Civil War, when she did it from necessity, and not choice.

The wisdom of Mr. Wiess, in selecting the site he did, will be approved by every visitor who had been privileged to enjoy the hospitality of his home. The house is situated so that it overlooks the shining waters of the Neches on two sides with a porch seventy-five feet long extending its length, with a unique bannister arrangement. The bannister railing is attached by hooks to the gallery which may be let down and the railing serve as a shelf for airing mattresses, blankets and quilts. At one end entirely departed except for the covered passage are the dining room and kitchen, which plan has both advantages and disadvantages, but which was a popular style in the old days.

Tile floor prevails throughout the large house, and members of the family remember hearing it said that each one would change their heavy shoes upon entering the house. Soft house shoes were kept handy to change into.

Among pioneers who in defiance of all obstacles struck the roots of civilization deep into the soil of Jefferson County are the McFaddins. For over a hundred years they have been an integral part of the history of Jefferson County.

According to Mrs. Carrol McFaddin Ward, a life-long resident of Jefferson County, her great grandfather, James McFaddin, bid farewell to the hills of Tennessee; loaded his family and belongings into an ox-drawn covered wagon; and headed westward. The trek was long and rugged, but he pressed forward until he reached the unsettled wilderness of Lake Charles, Louisiana, where a son, William, was born in 1819.

The family then came to Jefferson County, then on to Moss Bluff at Liberty in 1823, then moved to Beaumont in 1833. McFaddin's first home was a small log cabin within a hundred yards of the present palatial home in the 1900 Block of McFaddin Avenue, so named in honor of this pioneer family.

James McFaddin went back to Tennessee on a business trip in 1840. He never returned to Texas. Word finally reached the family that he had died shortly after he returned to his native home.

The son, William, was married to Rachel Williams in 1837, and lived in the home established by his father, adding to the original house near the old log cabin. Nine children were born to this union. Their names were: James, Dave, Sarah (Mrs. Alexander), Dian (Mrs. W. C. Averill), Andrew, Ducilla (Mrs. Kent), Elizabeth, Charlie, and William Parry Herring. According to stories related by old timers, William was somewhat of a rugged pioneer; riding horseback over the vast prairie, rain or shine, with his rifle strapped

to his saddle, looking after his herds of cattle. Adding to his holdings, his empire soon extended from what is now the heart of Beaumont to Port Arthur.

The little log cabin as well as the home burned in 1906, but William's land was still intact. Another home was built in the middle 80's on the site of the log house, a large two-story house with picket fence around it. The McFaddin home came to be the stopping place of many who traveled through the maze of unmarked trails in this section in the early days. After William's death the McFaddin's holdings continued to expand in both land and cattle.

William Parry Herring, the son of William, along with other pioneers, formed the Beaumont Pasture Company, which controlled forty thousand acres of land lying between Taylor Bayou, Lake Sabine, and the Neches River in Jefferson County.

The company sold the land to Port Arthur Land Company on which the city of Port Arthur is now located. As soon as the sale was completed, W. P. H. McFaddin set out to restore the acreage lost in the transaction. He moved along building up his acreage until he had acquired one hundred thousand acres of land bordering the Gulf of Mexico. Object of the Pasture Company, when it was formed was to graze thousands of heads of cattle on their pasture land. Advent of the rice industry in this area changed these plans however. Soon the McFaddins formed a company to build a rice mill; the largest in the south when it opened in 1902. In 1901 the interests of the Pasture Company shifted to oil. That, too, was in the path of their holdings. The fabulous Lucas Gusher blew in on their land.

W. P. H. McFaddin often told of the mad rush for

land that came with the oil discovery. Many times he said, his company sold an acre of land for \$10,000.00.

1940 acreage from the McFaddin holdings for over a century, provided the site for the first federal housing project, Multimax Village, built to shelter defense plant workers and later turned over to the city of Beaumont for low income family housing unit.

It was McFaddin's land, too, purchased by the federal government that provided a site for facilities for the berthing of a fleet of ships, which were retired at the close of World War II. Scores of these surplus vessels that carried materials of war to battlefronts all over the world are now tied up at what is called McFaddin's bend in the Neches River.

W. P. H., coining the phrase, "All I want is my land and all that joins it," cautioned members of his family to hold on to their land, "for your land will keep you." This lesson was well learned by his children. W. P. H., Jr., J. L. Caldwell and Mrs. Mamie McFaddin Ward, who control the vast estate, dutifully adhere to their father's advice. Mrs. Carrol Ward, fourth generation of McFaddins, resides in the home at the location of the log cabin.

The progress of Jefferson County is due to the McFaddins and other leading families whose forbearance paved the way to achievement in the wilderness of East Texas and made it easier for those to come after.

The name Hargraves has long been identified with the development of Jefferson County; for several generations they date back to pre-Civil War days.

Hargraves came to what is now Jefferson County with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. George Hargraves, when he was only four years of age. The family came from Calcasieu Parish, Louisiana and settled on the

bank of Taylor's bayou in the southeast of Jefferson County. Mr. Hargraves served with distinction in the Civil War, serving in Captain George O'Brien's company.

In 1861, at Sabine Pass, Texas, he married Elizabeth Gallier. Of that marriage eight children were born. Mrs. Laura Hargraves Smith, ninety-one years of age and a Beaumont, Texas resident for many years is the only surviving member of this family.

Laura has vivid memories of her childhood days at Taylor's bayou. She recalls that her father bought a section of land for .50 an acre, and broke it up by ox-team, and planted cotton, corn, and sugar cane. Then not having a gin to have his cotton cleaned, he established his own gin, also grist and syrup mills. Laura remembers the scattered settlers bringing their corn on Saturday to her father's mill to have corn meal made. For a small toll, these settlers soon had a big sack of meal, enough for a whole week.

There were exchange butchers, too, on Saturday, when one settler would butcher a beef and lend so many pounds to several people and the following week one of the others would take his turn of butchering. In this way, Laura said, there was always fresh meat for Sundays.

Supplies, such as flour, sugar, coffee, were shipped from Galveston by the way of Sabine Pass, then on to Taylor's bayou landing. Since the schooner only made two trips a year, these commodities were bought by the barrels.

Of the eight Hargraves children, at the birth of each, their father branded a heifer calf and recorded the brand in each one's name, thus when they reached the age of twenty-one, they each had a nice herd of

cattle of their own. Each youngster had his own saddle, horse, and all learned to ride while very young.

There were no schools or churches in those days and the Hargraves children were tutored by their parents. Laura remembers the first school in the county was established at Taylor's bayou landing in her father's branding house. This house was formerly used by the men who gathered there to brand the large herds of cattle. Something like a tool house where they kept their ropes, branding irons, spurs, and such. A Mr. Barton was the teacher. All ages attended. Some grown men and women were among these early students.

There were no doctors in those days and settlers had to turn to herbs, roots, and home remedies for their ailments. Midwives attended the women at birth, and on some occasions when these midwives were unavailable, pioneer women gave birth unaided.

Dancing on Saturday nights was the only form of entertainment in those days. Usually some man in the community would play the fiddle for these dances. Square dances were popular, and the waltz "Over The Waves" was in vogue, according to Laura Hargraves.

Pioneer wash day was quite different from the push button present wash day. A battle board was used to beat the clothes clean after a generous soaping of home made lye soap. The clothes then were boiled into an open kettle for a few hours, then dripped in water and the soap rinsed out.

Custodian of many memories, Mrs. Laura Hargraves Smith is a link between the pioneer Jefferson County and the modern, progressive city of Beaumont, Texas. She can see the straggling wilderness where a few courageous souls gradually brought cultivation to the soil and civilization to the people. It is such as she

and her family who laid the foundation for the Jefferson County of today.

Among hardy pioneers who came to this section prior to the war between the states and settled on the northern shores of Lake Sabine were John Sparks and his wife Melinda, and his brother Solomon.

John Sparks was born March 26, 1811 somewhere in the hills of Tennessee. He was destined to play an important part in the development of the county.

The Sparks family migrated by ox team and wagon with their two children to the borders of Texas, on what was then known as Pavell's Island, lying at the junction of the Sabine and Neches rivers. John worked in a shingle mill, where cypress shingles were made by drawknives.

While the family resides at Pavell's Island, two other children were born. Thomas was born January 2, 1839, and Albert on March 26, 1841. Not being contented with being a shingle maker, and wanting a business of his own, John looked about for new opportunity. Near-by was the town of Sabine Pass, which was becoming important in the commercial life of southeast Texas, and contact between the people of that territory and these two towns became more frequent.

To facilitate the handling of this traffic, it was necessary to find a means of crossing Taylor's Bayou. So John Sparks soon supplied that means by establishing a ferry on that stream, which he operated for ten years. While living at that location, several other children were born to the couple; Jane, October 27, 1834; John Franklin, June 17, 1846; Sarah, December 25, 1848; Arabella (October 1, 1851; and James, December 10, 1853.

John, being a thrifty man and realizing that a fast

increasing family demanded greater opportunities than the ferry business offered to him, soon had saved enough money to buy some land. From Allen Franklin and his wife, he purchased 160 acres of land fronting the lake.

A temporary shelter was built on this newly acquired land, pending the time when a better home could be built. On March 23, 1856, the tenth child of the Sparks family was born in this temporary shelter. When Worthy Sparks was only a week old, this shelter was destroyed by fire, and the mother and baby barely escaped from the flames.

The family then moved back to Pavell's Island while construction of a new home was in the process. November 21, 1859 was a red letter day for the Sparks family. On that day they moved into their new home, which was built on their own land, and the last of twelve children in the family was born. This one was a boy, who was named Henry.

Brother Solomon, with his wife, joined his brother John, on the new farm and built himself a home a few hundred feet away to the north of John's home. There these two brothers cultivated the land on the shores of Lake Sabine, and reared their families.

Solomon and his wife had seven children: Lucy Ann, John, James, Mary Susan, William Enos, Joseph Madison, and Oscar. Records show that these two families raised their own food and much of their own clothing, for they raised and sheared sheep and carded and spun the wool.

As the children of John and Melinda grew and matured, they married and settled there.

Arabella became the wife of Fred Gentz, and then there was added to the little settlement a third home,

the home of the newly married couple, which stood on the spot of what is now the junction of DeQueen Boulevard and Lake Shore Drive. Jane married Sam Lee, a captain of a sailing ship. Then the fourth house was built. Then Jim decided it was time for him to marry, so he brought his bride from Beaumont, Texas, and another house was added to the settlement.

Sarah married Frank Brewton, and found their home several miles north of the settlement. There were four children born to this union; Silas Franklin, Mary Ethel, Almon, and Grace Lee.

John was one who believed in keeping the family together, even in death. So he established a family burial ground not more than fifty feet from his home. A part of this graveyard is covered by the paving of DeQueen Boulevard.

A very tragic incident occurred in the family of Solomon Sparks. Lucy Ann, the oldest child, while wading in the old river cove, was caught and drawn by an alligator, and her body was never recovered.

One of the great necessities was scholastic facilities for the children of the later generation, and in 1881, Sam Lee contracted with a young lady at Sabine Pass, Miss Mary Page, to come to the settlement, which had come to be known as Aurora, and teach his child Emma, paying the magnificent salary of \$10.00 a month. She had the right to include other children in the class if she could get them. In the fall of 1881, the first school in the village of Aurora, and what is now the city of Port Arthur, was convened. The following six pupils presented themselves to the teacher: Helen Gentz, Arthur Gentz, Grace Brewton, Frank Brewton, Jr., Wally Gentz, and Frank Pavell. These constituted the class. Additional scholastic facilities

were required, so Frank Gentz built a one-room school house just a few feet from his home. Mary continued to teach from 1881 to 1882. The little community of Aurora suffered seriously from a malignant disease, the symptoms of which described by survivors indicate it to have been a very virulent type of diphtheria. Five children of the Gentz family succumbed as well as members of other families. Discouraged and disheartened, the surviving members tore down four of the houses and moved them away to Beaumont, where they could have facilities of medical attention. There they began life anew.

In the fall of 1895, when the surveyors for Arthur Stillwell, who was constructing the Kansas City, Pittsburgh and Gulf railroad and who built the town of Port Arthur, arrived on the scene, the remains of Sam Lee's home were the only evidences of what had been the village of Aurora.

Worthy Cryndon Sparks then settled on what is now Howard Street in Beaumont, Texas, and continued to reside there until his death at the age of 90 in 1946.

Mr. Sparks often entertained his children and grandchildren with exciting stories of how he hunted alligators in the marshland, how he plugged them with gun shots. Mr. Sparks added to his meager salary for carrying the mail on horseback by hunting alligators and selling the hides, which brought a good price in those days.

All those who have known Mr. and Mrs. Worthy Cryndon Sparks remember a devoted old couple who celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in their Howard Street home in 1935.

Scores of friends from all over this section were on hand to congratulate the couple along with their chil-

dren. Included were Mrs. Lucy Eckles, H. A. Sparks, Mrs. A. H. Torian, Mrs. White, and Sidney J. Sparks.

Mrs. Lucy Eckles (Miss Lucy, as she is affectionately known to her many friends), is a veteran school teacher, having taught school in the South Park School 44 years. She also has been a Sunday School teacher for 34 years—teaching the same class. Some of her students enrolled in her class while young women and are now grandmothers.

Miss Lucy resides in her parents' old home on Howard Street, with her son Cryndon and his family. They have two sons, and two grandchildren. These two children, Sue Ellen Eckles and Terry Lynn Eckles, are the fifth generation of Sparks.

This is only the highlight of the history of a great family. Much more could be included if space would permit, as they contributed devotedly to the education and religious development of the county.

Among the leading pioneer families who have hewn their way to achievement in the wilderness of Texas, none is more influential than the Hebert family.

The family's genealogy is traced back to the early 1700's when the descendants made their way from France to Canada. They settled to what is now known as Acadia, or Nova Scotia. But before they were firmly rooted, the outbreak of the French War of 1755, the French were expelled from Canada.

With the expulsion came the Hebert family. Louis Hebert, Sr. was born on the boat bearing the exiles. With a group of other exiles, they settled in St. Martinsville, Louisiana on the bayou tech. Following the death of his fourth wife, in 1836, he left Louisiana. Bringing his children and a large number of Negro slaves for which he had paid \$1000.00 apiece in New

Orleans, he came to the wilderness of East Texas by ox-drawn wagons. Stock horses and three hundred heads of cattle were brought along. Joseph, the eldest child, was small at the time of the Exodus from Louisiana, but he gave some handed down accounts of the long, hazardous trek, of fording rivers, swimming the cattle and horses across swollen streams, and fighting Indians.

Arriving in what is now Jefferson County, just a few miles from what is now Beaumont, he purchased 1107 acres of land from Almason Houston, son of Sam Houston. He paid \$600.00 cash in hand for the land which had been colonized in 1835 by James Rowe during the Spanish grant, according to record of Jefferson Abstract Company. After acquiring the land, he built his home which still stands today, and the fourth generation of Heberts resides in it.

The home is constructed of hewed pine sills and cypress timber, the work being done by slave labor. At first it was a two-story, eight room building, but with the increasing family of the son, Joseph, which consisted of fifteen children, and by then was living in the home, a third story was added.

Louis lived to the venerable age of ninety, acquiring large interests in land, long-horned cattle and taking his place of leadership in the frontier community.

The Hebert home has seen many lively parties and all night dances. Many old timers have fond recollections of those far back events. An old timer recalls on one occasion when it rained during the dance, that thirty people were bedded at the Hebert house because of muddy roads. Mr. Hebert was a fiddle player and when he swung into a tune, at once the floor was crowded with waltzing couples.

The Heberts were among the first to begin growing rice in the area. It was grown in ponds and low places in small patches where water stood, and it was called provential rice.

D. M. Hebert, and his sister Beulah, great-great-grandchildren of Louis, now reside in the old homestead of their ancestors, which has been modernized. They recall accounts of pioneer hardship on the open range, working with the cowhands. The only method of preserving meat of which they had plenty, was by cutting it in strips called "tasso" then saturating it in salt and hanging it out on the fence to dry. Or sometimes for special occasions, they would place a piece of meat in a pail, tie a rope to it and let it down into the well just above the water; in that way it would keep for a few days. They made their own soap with the tallow. Wild ducks and geese could be shot from their yard.

In the background of the home is the family cemetery where graves are shaded by huge oak and hickory trees. Several generations of Heberts rest in that well kept cemetery among lilies and jasmine.

The several generations of Heberts run into thousands. The progress of Jefferson County is due to families such as the Heberts, who have contributed so much to its development.

Veteran school teacher Edward Craigan came to Taylor's bayou community from New Orleans soon after the Civil War. According to family stories, Mr. Craigan ran away from college on several occasions to join the Confederate Army. He was successful in his last attempt and ultimately lost a foot in battle. Refusing to accept a medical discharge, he joined a cavalry unit and served out the rest of the war with General Forrest.

Mr. Craigan married Miss Ellen Snichsnider, a native of Taylor's bayou community. She was born in 1859, and was eighteen years of age when married. The couple had nine children, of which only three are living. Following their marriage, Mr. Craigan taught school for ten years in that community. He taught in homes at first, traveling on horseback to a home where several children gathered for tutoring. Later a school was established at Hamshire, and he taught ten years there, at \$25.00 per month. He was also the first rural mail carrier to carry the mail from Beaumont to Taylor's bayou and LaBelle on a weekly basis. He died in 1910.

Mrs. Craigan carried on the task of rearing her brood with the additional task of rearing seven of her grandchildren left orphaned. For years she plowed, milked nine cows, morning and night, and rode side-saddle to round up her herd of cattle which roamed at large on the prairie. She spun her own yarn and wove it into cloth for her brood. She recalls the first rice she ever saw, which was planted in a duck pond near her home. Rice was thrown into the pond and oxen walked around in it to stir up the mud. The water was then drained, leaving the rice buried in the mud. When the rice was matured, it was cut with a scythe and then the grain removed by whipping it into a barrel. Next step then was the cleaning of the rice. This was done, Mrs. Craigan explained, by the aid of a cypress wood mortar and a two-foot-long pestle. The mortar was made by chipping little holes in the end of a four-foot cut of log, bulding a fire in the holes, and alternate burning and chipping, smoothing a recess in the wood block. Mrs. Craigan said, "In a few hours, I could clean enough rice for a meal for my large family."

In spite of her one hundred and first birthday, which she celebrated on October 5, 1960, Mrs. Craigan still shows interests in the crops, cattle and happenings of her children, grand and great-grand-children. Leo, with whom she makes her home in the little town of Fannett, is sixty-five years of age. Lee is sixty-three, and Roy fifty-six, all of Fannett. She has forty-seven grandchildren, fifty-nine great-grandchildren, and thirty-one great-great-grandchildren, and the direct descendants run into the hundreds. The family is so large that when they all get together, there are so many sets of grandmothers around the place that Ellen Craigan is especially referred to as "The Old Grandma."

The Kyles are among the well-known families of Jefferson County, whose acts of benevolence have spread, to merge into the civil, social and religious life of the county.

Dr. O. M. Kyle settled in Beaumont, Texas, in 1866, coming from Roganville community, where the family's large plantation was known as Kyle Hill. His son, W. W. Kyle, married the former Clyde Weiss. They built their home at 1530 Sabine Pass, in Beaumont, and Mrs. Kyle still resides there. Mr. Kyle died in 1945. The famous Kyle Opera House on Orleans and Liberty Streets, which many old-timers have fond recollections of the many delightful shows there, was one of Mr. Kyle's many contributions to Beaumont.

The two sons are W. W. Kyle, Jr. and Col B. E. Kyle of the Army reserve. They are joint owners of the Kyle Clothing Store for men, located on the site of their father's opera house.

The Eddy Nolta family settled in Nome, Texas in Jefferson County in 1895, and is one of the pioneer

rice farmers of this section. Mr. Nolta planted his first crop in 1895, on a tract of land south of Nome, planting three hundred and twenty acres of land purchased from the state of Texas for two dollars an acre. The Nolta family has been vitally interested in all concerns and developments of the community and the county.

E. O. Mauboules also settled in Nome, Texas when the community was a wide open prairie. He engaged in stock raising and later farmed rice. He was born in Bayou Lafourch, Louisiana. His parents came from France before the Civil War.

Records at the court house show that George O. B. Millard and Anne Millard purchased three lots from W. J. Owens in 1888. The site on the bend of the Neches river was known as Water and Austin Streets. The old building which was on the property was moved off and the present vine-covered house was built in 1899 and had remained in the Millard family until recent years, when the city of Beaumont purchased the property. The old home still stands, and a son, Paul Millard, a former city manager, resides in it.

The Millard family demonstrated such faith and optimism in the future by their courageous and pioneer spirit pressing toward a goal of building a towering city. Some of the younger members of the family have lived to see this achieved.

The Smythe Walden family history dates back to 1877, when George W. Smythe, distinguished citizen and patriot of Texas, came from Jasper County to Beaumont, and built a home on Elizabeth Street. Mr. Smythe Walden, grandson of pioneer George W. Smythe and Mrs. Walden, the former Louella Ward, reside in the old home which has been moved to 2565

Louisiana. The Waldens have two sons, Charles Smythe, and Kyle Ward. The family originally came from North Carolina. The great grandfather was born there in 1803, then came to Texas in 1827. He was appointed by the Mexican government as a surveyor, and afterward was appointed by the same authority as Commissioner of Title to issue title to colonists who were entitled to land grants. He was also one of the signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence. He was also appointed by President Mirabeau B. Lamar, in 1839, as the Texas Commissioner to run the boundary line between the Republic of Texas and the United States from the mouth of the Sabine river to where the twenty-third degree of latitude crossed the river and thence due north to the Red river.

In 1852, he was elected to the First Congressional District of Texas, which then included all or about all of the counties now known as East Texas. He died in 1866, and is buried in the state cemetery at Austin, Texas. He left several generations of descendants living in and around Beaumont and Jefferson County.

Mrs. Ida Barr's eyes sparkle with pride when she relates the experiences of her venturesome grand parents, Mr. and Mrs. William Kyle, who came to Texas from Florida in a covered wagon in the early 1800's to make a new life in a new land, and turned out to be the builders of the colorful history of the area.

Along on this three months hazardous trek was their four-year-old daughter, who later became Mrs. Thomas Buford, and mother of Mrs. Ida Barr. Related stories reveal that one day the caravan came to a halt somewhere along the gulf for a much needed rest when suddenly appeared a band of Tejas Indians who wanted to buy the little girl. "My mother was so afraid her

father would sell her that she hid under some beddings in the wagon," Mrs. Barr related with a chuckle. "But it turned out that the Indians were appeased with a few trinkets and left peacefully.

According to Mrs. Barr, her grandfather settled first in Jasper County, then moving to Sabine Pass. Later the daughter married Mr. Thomas Buford, who owned vast real estate holdings in both Sabine Pass and Port Arthur.

After his sudden death, Mrs. Buford, with her three children moved to this little community on the bank of the Neches River and purchased a large tract of wooded land where she built the spacious home. Mrs. Buford was an influential figure in the development of Beaumont. By her generosity and foresight many streets were opened and general improvements were made. Included in the streets opened and named by Mrs. Buford, are Sabine Pass, so named for the little fort on the gulf where her family first settled, and Buford Street is a memorial to this great pioneer woman.

Mrs. Barr has lived to see her mother's fondest dream come true to see Beaumont take its place as an important city with a great future — she has been an integral part of the pioneer life of the city, yet she is part also of the twentieth century, "Machine Age," linking it with pioneer life.

"I am humbly thankful for the heritage of a good family," Mrs. Barr said modestly. "I consider the gift of a good name greater than all the world's goods." The name Barr is synonymous with that of Beaumont for two generations have been prominently identified in the field of medical and surgical science, as well as civic and social.

To the Barr and Buford families, Beaumonters owe

a debt of gratitude for their courage feats in facing privation for the sake of preparing an easier road for those to come after them. For their preserved culture and traditional pioneer hospitality which persisted from the time of their arrival on the frontier, Beaumont owes homage.

The city of Beaumont, Texas has grown up around the J. J. French home at 2995 French Road. In an old home contest held by the Enterprise and Journal in 1957, the old home was declared the oldest in this area. It was built one hundred and twenty-three years ago at that time.

J. J. French, Sr. came to this area from New England in 1831, and three years later he built this home which still stands today.

Upon the death of the senior French, his son, John Jay French, Jr., assumed control of the property. At his death in 1914, the property progressed to his daughter, Mrs. R. P. Easter, who still resides in the old home.

The old homestead is rich in romance and history. There are fragments of stone supports that once held the first steam rice mill in the county. Beyond the groves of oaks was one of the first tanneries in this section of the street.

The acorns from whence the oaks came and were planted by Mr. French were brought from Opelousas, Louisiana, in 1837.

The Carrolls originally came from Dallas County, Alabama. Frank L. Carroll, father of L. E. Carroll, came to Beaumont soon after the close of the Civil War, in which he served with distinction in the Second Louisiana Cavalry. Mr. Carroll began his career in the Lone Star State, with whose lumber interests his

name is inseparably linked. Mr. L. E. Carroll organized the Beaumont Lumber Company. This company was one of Mr. Carroll's greatest achievements in the lumber business. It was he who built up the immense organization and was the chief factor until the sale of the property to the Kirby Lumber Company in 1900.

Mr. Carroll then took up his residence in Waco and made that city his home, where he devoted his remaining years to the welfare of Baylor University. He was secretary and treasurer of the institution, and one of his many gifts was a large sum for a memorial hall.

The Carroll family linked with the organizing of the Beaumont school system. George W. Carroll was one of its first board members when the city school system was organized in 1884. Under the census enumeration of that year, there were two hundred and fifty-three white and one hundred and seventy-four negro children of school age.

Mr. Carroll's first duty as a board member was that of purchasing the old Fireman's hall and the negro Odd Fellows hall for \$567.50 for school buildings, and employed five white and three negro teachers.

Descendants of this great pioneer family are among the best known citizens of the city of Beaumont, Texas.

CHAPTER 8

EDUCATION

According to the Beaumont Enterprise of Sunday, November 6, 1955, the first public school records date back to 1880. It was a crude beginning and Jefferson County's pioneers were likely not aware that they

were blazing the trail for the establishment of today's multi-million-dollar investment in buildings and educational facilities.

The first establishment which opened its doors on September 15, 1880, represented a united community effort to secure something good for children of the community.

Up to that date, children had learned their reading, writing and arithmetic during irregular study periods conducted by their mothers or by some neighbor who was particularly adept with books.

Private schools were few in the County, and in scattered communities which was difficult for children to attend these schools. The Beaumont Academy, as this was first called, grew out of the tireless effort of early day citizens who wanted better educational facilities for their children, and the venture was financed entirely through public subscription.

Settlers gave what they could. Subscriptions ranged from \$1.00 to \$100.00, but donations of \$100.00 were rare. Six hundred dollars which was stretched to cover the construction of a school building and teachers' salaries for one year, was the first budget for that first system.

The movement to erect the first community school started on June 16, 1879. On that day a group of citizens met to draw up a petition which was to be circulated throughout the little community.

The petition read: "We the undersigned obligate ourselves respectively to pay the sum affixed opposite our names at such time, and such sums as may be determined by parties to be hereafter authorized for the purpose of procuring the grounds and purchasing or erected the necessary buildings, improvements and

furniture for a school in the town of Beaumont of such grade or grades and upon such plan or organization and management as shall be desired by the majority of the stockholders at a meeting hereafter to be called."

Captain George W. O'Brien was authorized to receive the donations. Notes made by W. L. Rigsby, one of this community's early residents, reveal that in less than a month on July 8, 1879, the response to the petition had been so generous that a called meeting of interested citizens was held at this time to consider ways and means to construct a school building. At that time \$1,500.00 had been subscribed to the fund.

The subscribers then formed a stock company with Captain George O'Brien serving as temporary chairman and W. L. Rigsby as temporary secretary. Shares in the company were available at \$5.00 each. A Committee consisting of Mr. Rigsby, C. C. Caswell and W. A. Tyree was named to select a site for the school.

Four days later, July 12, 1879, the stockholders met to set a date for the completion of the school building and the opening date for the first term of school.

They specifically stipulated that the opening date should be September 15, 1880, and that the school should have a capacity for 150 students. Professor George H. Stovall should take charge of the school term. A board of trustees were elected on July 19, 1879, which consisted of C. C. Caswell, W. A. Tyree, John Ward, E. T. Seale, and M. C. Alexander.

The school site was purchased from a Mrs. Van Worm for \$150.00 and the first school was erected on what is now Park Street in Beaumont.

Seeking to make every move legal and binding, school officials entered into written contract with Professor Stovall. This valued old record reads: "The

State of Texas, County of Jefferson. This contract entered into by and between Professor George H. Stovall of the first part and The Beaumont Academy of the second part witnesseth;

“That the said party of the first part agrees to assume and perform faithfully and to the best of his ability all of the responsibilities and duties of Principal, teacher, and chief of the faculty of the Beaumont Academy for and during the ensuing season thereof to begin on the 6th day of September, 1880, and to end with 10 scholastic months from said date, for the salary hereinafter stipulated; that should the attendance of pupils upon said school be 50 or less, the board of trustees of said school have the discretion of dispensing with the service and salary of an assistant; and that should said Academy during any portion of the said season be organized and converted into a public school, he would conform in every regulation governing the same for the period thereof.”

Mr. Stovall was considered one of the finest teachers of that day, and after the Beaumont Academy became part of the public school system, which was formed in 1881, he remained as head of the city school for some time.

The names of the pioneers who subscribed to the Beaumont Academy are names still popular in Jefferson County, on road and street markers.

First Catholic school in the county was opened in 1895, by nuns pioneering the way for a major educational institution within the county. The Nuns came to survey the educational needs of the little community that is now Beaumont and to decide whether a parochial school was needed here.

As a result of that visit, three members of their

order, the Dominicans, came to the community that year and opened first parochial school in Beaumont, in Jefferson County.

The church parish house was turned over to them for their classes and living quarters. Priests slept on the floor of the sanctuary until a frame school building and convent was built.

Lamar College of Jefferson County is an example of what a community can do in the field of higher education. In 1923, when a local high school (South Park) board of education sought to provide additional schooling for the area's youth beyond the high school course, a way was sought to obtain a junior college.

Pioneer bill was drawn for the creation of junior colleges in the other parts of the state. At first Lamar had to share space in a local high school (South Park) but its growth called for separate rate facilities and by 1932, Lamar had a building of its own, the present MacArthur Junior High building in Beaumont, Jefferson County, and the name changed from South Park Junior College to Lamar Junior College.

So phenomenal was the growth of the school and the demands for admission from an area outside the South Park schools that the second major phase in the school's history took place. With the aid of the Young Men's Business League and others, the Lamar Junior College District was formed by the postwar years, Lamar was rated nationally as being one of the top junior colleges in the nation.

By 1947, the need for a technological college was recognized and Jefferson County residents went to the support of the school in getting the Legislature to create a four-year technological college. In 1949, the Legislature passed the Lamar Bill, but because of lack

of funds, it did not become a law. Southeast Texas continued its work with the Legislature and this time the move was accomplished with a four-year school opening in 1951.

SCHOOL GROWTH IN BEAUMONT

Below are figures showing the scholastic population of the area served by the Beaumont City Schools and the South Park School District. The average membership and average daily attendance figures are for the public school districts only. The difference between the number of scholastics and membership figures are accounted for by transfers to private and parochial schools and by high school graduates who are still within the scholastic age.

Year	Scholastics	Membership	A.D.A.
1940-41	15,994	11,919	11,102
1941-42	16,061	12,309	11,245
1942-43	16,352	13,411	11,975
1943-44	17,358	13,268	12,217
1944-45	17,752	13,291	12,322
1945-46	18,447	12,740	11,814
1946-47	17,251	12,636	12,001
1947-48	16,445	12,921	11,995
1948-49	16,662	13,405	12,650
1949-50	17,369	14,357	13,588
1950-51	17,938	15,326	14,186
1951-52	18,995	16,002	14,931
1952-53	19,639	16,553	15,284
1953-54	20,791	17,897	16,664
1954-55	22,164	18,680	17,739
1955-56	23,280	20,614	18,507
1956-57	23,248	20,611	19,516
1957-58	25,539	21,671	20,071

Prepared by: Industrial Department
Chamber of Commerce
Beaumont, Texas

PUBLIC SCHOOL FACILITIES

Public free school education in Beaumont is provided by two independent school districts. These are: Beaumont City Schools and the South Park School District. For many years, both of these school systems have enjoyed the highest rating given to any school system in the State of Texas.

Through periodic checks and comparative studies, the quality of instruction offered by the teachers has been found to be equal to, and in many cases, superior to that found in other systems of comparable size.

The school plant facilities consist of forty-four campuses. Most of the buildings are modern and are provided with excellent laboratories and other facilities essential to providing complete instruction in a wide range of subjects. Fourteen of the school plants are provided with gymnasiums.

Of the forty-four separate schools in the systems, there are five high schools and eight junior high schools.

The thirteen schools for colored students provide adequate facilities for this race.

The course of instruction, in addition to the ordinary academic subjects, includes such specialty courses as vocational agriculture, home economics, music, journalism, industrial arts, etc.

In addition to the public school systems, there are five parochial schools operated by the Catholic faith. Of these, three are elementary schools and two are high schools, one of each for colored. St. Mark's Episcopal and St. John's Lutheran Churches operate elementary schools.

Prepared by: Industrial Department, Chamber of Commerce, Beaumont, Texas.

LAMAR STATE COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

Lamar State College of Technology at Beaumont, Texas, Jefferson County, is a fully accredited four-year state college, offering degrees in 41 major areas. As the only state college in Texas located in an industrial area, it offers its students many unique advantages in strong engineering, technological and scientific programs as well as excellent curricula in the liberal arts, fine arts and business.

Lamar Tech is relatively new in educational circles, but already has established itself as an outstanding institution. It enjoys high academic standards and an excellent reputation among graduate and professional schools throughout the nation. Despite its newness (Lamar Tech was established as a four-year college in 1951), it ranks as the fifth largest of the 18 state-supported colleges in Texas with more than 6,000 students and an anticipated enrollment of over 10,000 by 1964.

Lamar Tech has the most modern college campus in the Southwest. Its buildings are all new and functional, built in the contemporary architectural trend. The campus is a showplace in Southeast Texas.

Students have ample opportunity for athletic, social, and spiritual development at Lamar. The college competes in the Lone Star Conference, fielding championship contenders in all sports and for five years has been the national champion in both tennis and golf.

Ten national Greek letter fraternities and sororities have chapters on the campus.

All major denominational groups maintain student centers and Bible Chairs adjacent to the campus with college credit granted for courses taught there.

The college operates an extensive evening program for working adults who may choose to pursue degree curricula, courses related to the skilled trades, or special interest courses in such fields as insurance, banking, real estate, transportation, etc. Evening academic courses are taught by regular college faculty and are applicable toward degrees. Many persons obtain Bachelor's degrees entirely through evening attendance.

Lamar Tech offers the Bachelor of Arts degree in Biology, Chemistry, Economics, English, Geology, Government, History, Mathematics, Sociology; Bachelor of Business Administration degrees in Accounting, Economics, Finance, General Business, Management, Marketing, Retailing, Secretarial Science; and Bachelor of Science degrees in Biology, Chemical Engineering, Chemistry, Civil Engineering, Commercial Art, Economics, Electrical Engineering, Elementary Education, Geology, Geological Engineering, Government, History, Home Economics, Industrial Engineering, Mathematics, Mechanical Engineering, Medical Technology, Music, Physical and Health Education, Physics, Secondary Education, Social Science, Sociology, Speech; and probably will initiate graduate work in selected fields within the next year.

CHAPTER 9

EARLY RELIGIOUS MEETINGS

The history of Jefferson County shows that pioneers held religious services outdoors, under trees and in homes. Lack of church facilities did not dampen the ardor with which early settlers worshipped their God

nor the zeal with which, afoot or on horseback, intrepid circuit-riding preachers made their precarious way to this remote settlement.

Ministers and priests who rode horseback through swamplands and woods to bring the Word of God to pioneers called this section Alligator Circuit. Preachers who conducted services and rode the reptile-infested trails to reach the community supplemented their meager income by killing alligators enroute and selling the skins.

Families who attended worship service brought their lunches and after services served dinner on the grounds. During the meal and social gatherings which followed, the women talked of quiltings, drying and preserving food. The men discussed crops, stock and barn raisings, or planning a helping-hand day for a sick neighbor. A whole neighborhood of many miles would gather with teams, hoes and other farm implements and work the farm of a neighbor who was ill.

Then would come the evening service which usually took place about 3 p m. so that the pioneers would have ample time to reach home in their horse-drawn wagon before night-fall.

Church meetings in those days were the only kind that brought the entire community together. Held three or four times a year, they were welcome to those pioneers whose lives for the most part were one long, backstruggle to survive in lonely wilderness.

In religious, as in community affairs, the first settlers along these banks of the Neches River helped each other. Often Protestant ministers performed weddings for Catholic families, the unions to be blessed by the priest on his next trip to the community. Likewise Catholic priests on their trips performed religious rites

for Protestant families. It was not uncommon in those days for both faiths to hold communal worship.

Records show that the Methodist first church founded in what is now Beaumont, having established a place of worship in 1848. A circuit-riding minister reached the community about four times a year.

In 1852, Parson Pipkin came to be the first Protestant minister in this section. He settled first at Wiess Bluff on the Neches River. He later moved to Cuncan's woods in Orange County a few miles across the Neches River. From his home there the Reverend Mr. Pipkin was able to make regular trips into the community. He moved here in 1859, and from then Methodists have had regular church service.

History of the Catholic Church goes back almost three-quarters of a century. In 1880, priests were still riding horseback from diocese headquarters in Galveston to hold services. Two years later the initial mass was celebrated in the community's first Catholic church, St. Louis Church, erected at the corner of what is now Bowie and Orleans Streets in Beaumont. The priest in charge was Father John Lee.

The Baptists date farther back, according to old timers who recall of that denomination gathering in the old courthouse building and later in the schoolhouse about where the Gilbert Building stands now. There were no regular ministers at that time. The preaching was done by different ones. One of the early volunteered preachers was Jeff Rhodes, Sr., whose son served as pastor of the Woodville Church for some thirty-six years.

As related by old timers, Mrs. Lauzana Calder, on November 4, 1876, sold to John C. Craig, chairman of the building committee, two lots at the corner of Main

and Fannin. Their legal descriptions are Lots 73 and 74 of Block 14 of the city of Beaumont.

The deed was made to the Methodist Church, for the sum of \$150.00, but there was a stipulation therein.

The property was that of the Methodist Church, but to be used by the Baptist denomination until such time as they should erect themselves a church.

This old building was used by Baptist folks for ten years. It faced Main Street and had plenty of room for expanding in those days. The Baptists built their own church in 1883, on the corner of Liberty and Pearl Streets. Their first pastor was H. C. Weymouth. Their second pastor was L. C. Kellis. The congregation soon outgrew the little building and a new brick one was erected on Pearl and Forsythe where the city library now stands. Members who united with the church were baptized in the Neches River, where the K. C. S. railroad spans the stream.

The Christian Church also ranks as one of the earliest. The congregation was formed in 1899 with thirty-five members. The Jewish settlers who came to Jefferson County in the early 1880's organized a congregation in 1887.

CHURCH GROWTH INDICATIVE OF PROGRESS AND STABILITY OF POPULATION

The number of churches in Beaumont has increased almost one hundred per cent during the past twenty-five years. Each year there are several new structures built and extensive improvements made on many of the older institutions.

The religious faiths maintaining churches in the community and the number of congregations are:

Assembly of God	6
Baptist	72
Christian	4
Christian Science	1
Church of Christ	8
Church of God	2
Church of God in Christ	8
Congregational	1
Episcopal	3
Greek Orthodox	1
Hebrew	2
Holiness	1
Jehovah's Witnesses	1
Lutheran	2
Methodist	13
Mormon	1
Nazarene	1
Pentecostal	5
Presbyterian	5
Roman Catholic	8
Seventh Day Adventist	2
Spiritualist	2
Unitarian	1
Other Miscellaneous Denominations	22

Source: City Directory

Prepared by: Industrial Department
Chamber of Commerce
Beaumont, Texas

CHAPTER 10

COUNTY'S FIRST HOSPITAL

Jefferson County's first hospital, now one of the finest in the state, had a humble beginning back in 1896 when the hospital provided space for the care of 24 patients in its two wards and two private rooms.

Into the picture that was Beaumont between 1895-97 that leadership was found in the person of Father M. P. McSorley, parish priest in Divine Providence. Surely he must have envisioned the Beaumont of our

day when he sought for and obtained the approval of the late Bishop Gallagher of Galveston to erect a hospital to care for the sick, especially the sick, poor, and the colored people of the sprawling town which was Beaumont more than fifty years ago.

Having obtained the Bishop's permission and his blessing upon his contemplated endeavor, Father McSorley lost no time in requesting Mother M. Benedict Kennedy, the Superior General of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, whose Motherhouse was then St. Mary's Infirmary, Galveston, the oldest hospital in Texas, to send some of her Sisters to Beaumont to operate a hospital.

Father McSorley's idea found fertile ground in the imagination and vision of the Superior General, who heard his plea and on November 21, 1896, accepted his invitation for the foundation. Consequently, on December 19th of that year Sister Mary Rose Cashin and Sister Joachim were sent to Beaumont to select a site for the proposed hospital and to make final arrangements.

Negotiation was in May, 1897, when a half block of ground was purchased for \$700.00 with a promise from the owners to reserve sale on the remaining portion of the property until the Sisters could afford to buy it. A short year later, they bought it and a dream of a noble man was nearing realization.

The first load of lumber for *Hotel Dieu* was donated to the Sisters by Colonel W. A. Fletcher, early day lumberman who set the pace for other timber interests in the area. On June 12, 1897, construction was begun.

The site selected was on the banks of the meandering Neches River. Situated on the property was a small cottage where the Sisters lived while they solicited the

lumber and supervised the erection of the first unit of Hotel Dieu, which has been a Beaumont landmark for the past fifty years. The first unit, a three-story frame structure, still stands. One section is being used for a School of Nursing; another for colored patients.

That humble beginning was fraught with innumerable hardships, and it was only with considerable difficulty that the Sisters carried on their hospital work during their first years in Beaumont.

SMALLPOX EPIDEMIC

The hospital received its first real test in 1899 when a smallpox epidemic swept the area, and scores of persons were stricken. Bed space in the small hospital was soon taxed to the limit and cots were set side by side in the corridors. The staff of four Sisters who manned the hospital worked around the clock. They were truly pioneers, blazing the trail amid trials and hardships; but their indomitable willpower and dependence upon God carried them through successfully.

THE FIRST BIRTH

Hospital record shows the first birth was a boy. The mother was Mrs. Garvin, resident of Beaumont. Records read: "Mother and son doing fine."

The first operation recorded in Hotel Dieu was a double lajarotomy. Pioneer Doctor Barr performed the operation, assisted by Doctors Goldstein and Fry.

In 1909, a nursing school was added to the hospital and since that time the services of the hospital have constantly broadened and expanded to meet the growing needs for the increased hospitalization.

According to hospital records, 620 registered nurses have been trained in Hotel Dieu School of Nursing

since it was founded. The first class of nurses — nine in number — was received. Two years later only seven emerged graduate nurses from Hotel Dieu School of Nursing, which had been chartered under the laws of Texas. Thus another milestone had been passed; and the school of nursing has since existed, improving each year to meet the high standards set by the State Board of Nurse Examiners.

In 1901, the Spindletop oil boom brought a great influx of people to Beaumont. Almost over night the sleepy little sawmill village town was transformed into a bustling city. The hospital which could accommodate 24 patients in the two wards and two private rooms was far from adequate; consequently the necessity for a larger hospital was quite evident. The Sisters lost no time in raising to the needs and meeting the crisis. In July of that year, Mr. C. M. Gauthier was chosen a contractor for the new annex that was built on the same property adjacent to the first building. Then the bed capacity was increased to sixty.

Hardly was this crisis met before another arose! In 1913, a larger and more substantial hospital became a pressing need to care for the increasing number of patients seeking hospitalization.

In 1941, Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Phelan, Beaumonters, gave \$50,000.00 for the erection of a new Chapel in memory of Mrs. Phelan's parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Cunningham. The Sisters decided then to build a new convent as the old one was quite delapidated. That time benefactors in the persons of Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Broussard, Sr., gave the money for the furnishings.

Further expansion of the plant of Hotel Dieu was interrupted by World War II. Because of critical shortages of materials and labor, plans for the two build-

ings, a new school of nursing, and a Negro hospital had to be abandoned. That dream will be a realization in the not too far distant future, the Sisters remarked.

In 1943, there was an appeal for more nurses for the Armed Forces, as well as for the home front. The Bolton Act was passed by Congress, whereby Federal aid was given to all schools of nursing which participated in the Nurse Cadet Corps Program. That Act provided for all educational expenses of students to encourage young women to become nurses.

Hotel Dieu School of Nursing was one of the first to participate; and, to accommodate the additional enrollment of students, the two-story frame building which was then housing a number of colored patients was cleared, remodeled, repapered, and painted for their use.

When Hotel Dieu first opened its door to receive patients, the population of Beaumont was about 8,000. Today it is over 100,000. During these fifty years, more than 100,000 patients have been admitted and treated.

After the war, the building program was reactivated and the Hotel Dieu is one of the finest, with all conveniences for the comfort and welfare of the patient.

Beaumont looks to its derricks, and its great oil wells, but the firmness of any city, and the unbroken bond which it begets, comes out of the vigor of religion which makes men reach for the eternal things that never change. There is there all the beauty and sweetness of the human heart. The Bishop's Prayer.

BEAUMONT — A MEDICAL CENTER

Nine hospitals, having nearly 850 beds for patients serve the needs of the physically ill in Beaumont and this area.

Construction of the new St. Elizabeth Hospital will begin March 1, 1960. When completed in late 1960, this hospital will provide an additional 217 patient beds.

The local hospitals and their bed capacity are:

	Bassinets	No. of Beds
Baptist Hospital	50	270
Beaumont Infirmary		20
City Municipal Hospital	10	50
Jefferson County Tuberculosis Hosp.		
White		110
Colored		50
Douglas Hospital Clinic — (Colored)		14
Hammond Hospital Clinic		20
Hotel Dieu & Martin de Porres		165
(Colored and White Represented)		
Palms Hospital		37
St. Therese Hospital	30	85
Sprott Hospital — (Colored)	5	12
	<hr/> 95	<hr/> 833

Source: Information supplied by each institution.

Prepared by: Industrial Department
Chamber of Commerce
Beaumont, Texas.

Pioneer Doctors of Early Beaumont belong to history. They are charter members of Beaumont's first Hospital staff. The list includes: Dr. W. W. Cunningham, Dr. J. S. Price, Dr. Felix Martin, Dr. Louis Goldstein, Dr. T. H. Frey, Dr. H. A. Barr, Dr. W. F. Thomson, Dr. J. M. Gober, Dr. Bruce Richardson, Dr. D. D. Henderson, Dr. W. J. Blewett, Dr. Guy Reed, Dr. D. S. Wier and Dr. C. A. Coob.

CHAPTER 11

AGRICULTURE

Although Beaumont and the Sabine Area is best known today as a highly industrialized district, agriculture still contributes materially to the economy of the region.

Forestry, through the years, has been one of the major sources of income. Its continuing importance is evidenced by the fact that in the eleven southeastern Texas counties in Beaumont's immediate trade territory, 12.5% of the state's annual forestry crop is harvested. As additional facilities to process this crop, a large modern saw mill and a pulp and paper mill — both located within a few minutes drive of Beaumont — began operation in late 1954.

Beef cattle raising contributes materially to the wealth of the area. Pasture and herd improvement programs started in recent years are making this section known as one of the more important cattle raising regions of the State.

The most important agricultural crop in the city's trade area is rice. Jefferson County is one of the leading rice producing counties. Not only is it a leader in total production but also in per acre yield. This is evidenced by the fact that the county produces 12.7% of the Texas rice crop on 11.8% of the state's rice-growing land. The six southeastern parishes of Louisiana — considered to be in the Beaumont trade territory — produce 60% of that state's rice crop

Because of its location in the rice growing region of the two states, Beaumont has three large rice mills to process this crop. The Texas Rice Experiment Sta-

tion, which carries on an intensive program of varietal and cultural research, is located here.

HISTORY AND PROGRESS OF THE RICE INDUSTRY

The fascinating history of the rice industry in Jefferson County had its beginning over a century ago. Who dreamed then, that industry with its crude beginning would revolutionize our whole economy, and transfer wilderness into towering cities?

No other industry has made greater progress and as rapidly. It has become one of the most highly mechanized farm industries in the nation. Most of its operations are being handled with machines, from the first plowing of the land to the drying in dryers.

Rice farming of a century ago was a back-breaking fifteen hours a day toil. The work was done by hand and crude tools. Now these long strenuous hours are over. It is replaced by self-propelled tractors, combines and airplanes. The farmers now spread fertilizer, sow seeds, apply chemicals for weed control by airplanes. Self-propelled combines replaced mules, threshing and shocking by hand.

CRUDE BEGINNING

Soon after the Civil War a few adventurous families from neighboring states and territories braved the hazardous wagon trail and headed toward an unknown land. The trail was long and rugged but they moved steadily until they reached the unsettled coast of Texas. There they took up the struggle of wresting their livelihood from the bare wilderness about them. After completing the arduous tasks of building shelters from pine logs and rounding up a few wild cattle

for meat, which both were plentiful, they turned their attention to plowing the ground which was done by oxen, or in some cases prairie ponies pulled the plow.

Since irrigation was unknown, and as rice must have plenty of water for growth, they had to trust to what was known as "providence rice." That was somewhat of a gamble, if there were not sufficient rainfall at the right time, they were sure to lose their crops.

After years of struggling a small irrigation system was developed on a nearby bayou. A pumping plant was installed and water was pumped into the field when needed. With the water system and a few tools they were able to produce a small amount of rice for commercial use which they had not been able to do before.

As soon as news reached the settlements along the coast new families moved into the area now known as Jefferson County, to try their luck in rice farming. The increasing acreage soon outgrew the irrigation system, and a larger one was built. The acreage increased and the industry grew at an amazing pace. By about 1890 the small bayou was no longer able to furnish enough water to supply the need and a canal was built.

The canal was constructed too near the gulf, and soon went out of business when incoming salt water from the gulf ruined many acres of rice. This misfortune caused a setback to rice farming for many years.

In about 1900 another canal was constructed, and one of the largest pumping plants in the country was built on the canal. This large irrigation system took some of the gamble out of rice farming, at least as far as the water was concerned.

The industry then grew by leaps and bounds. Large mules were purchased to pull the heavy double-mold broad plows, and soon the industry was on a top commercial basis. In a few years after the canal was built the acreage increased to a total of 75,000 acres in Jefferson County alone.

About 1909 a bumper crop caused an overproduction that broke the market and caused a heavy loss to farmers. In 1910 a rice grower's organization was formed to aid in finding markets for their rice, and to hold producers together thereby preventing a collapse of the industry.

In 1911 a few of the key men in the organization visited Holland and Germany in an effort to find new markets for the huge supply of rice stored in warehouses. These men were able to promote the sale of a large supply of rice in those countries, which helped restore prosperity to the farmers.

A large rice mill was built in Beaumont, Texas, to boost consumption. The milling industry played an important part in the promotion and sale of rice as a food. Until recent years there had been little support in getting consumption of rice throughout the country increased.

The milling industry was responsible for the attractive packages of rice with tantalizing southern recipes which were shipped throughout the United States and to many foreign countries. Consumption was boosted which gave rise to another large industry and subsequent development of a comprehensive research program.

In 1943 an Improvement Association was organized at a time when the rice industry was undergoing a

transition from the old mule power method to a modern mechanized method.

Among the many problems the new Improvement Association helped solve was in getting federal and state aid to develop a research program in Jefferson County. An Experiment Station was built near China, in Jefferson County, and it grew from a small beginning with only two research men, to what is said to be one of the largest stations in the country. In 1955 there were eight research projects being conducted by highly qualified technicians and assistants. The work of the Experiment Station has received comment throughout the rice world.

The excellent research program attracted large business firms which in recent years have given grant-in-aid to further research work. Among the many improvements derived from the research program are: Increased yield from 13 barrels per acre in 1933 to 18 to 20 barrels in 1955. Chemical weed control applied from airplanes speeding overhead at nearly 100 miles an hour.

Chemicals are made available through the research program that hasten the maturity of the rice in the field, so it may be harvested earlier and get it out of the field before winter rains set in. Another valuable development to the rice farmers is a new variety of rice especially adapted to the machine method of farming. The rice grows uniformly, and matures at the right height, and turns the grain loose at the touch of the combine's complicated mechanism.

The research work attracts agriculture men from countries who come to study up-to-date methods of rice farming, in order to increase production in their own countries.

Combines cover a field at the rate of 100 acres per day, compared to about 10 acres per day when the harvest was done by mule power. After the old binder had thrown the green bundles on the ground they had to be shocked by hand labor. The bundles, then remained in the field for some three weeks, until the grain was dry enough to thresh and sack.

The combine empties the grain into carts that carry the rice to a dryer where the moisture is removed in a few hours. Under the old method at least three weeks were required for the drying process. Rice farming has become more certain by shortcutting the old method, avoiding the threat of fall rains and storms.

An average farmer uses about eight to ten men to harvest his crop that previously required twenty-five or more when the old back-breaking methods were in use. Probably no other section of the nation has experienced greater agricultural progress in the past twenty or thirty years than the Gulf Coast area of Texas. It has changed into an area of specialization and mechanization.

Farming has become so mechanized that many farmers use airplanes to chase black-birds from their fields. Their working hours have been reduced to about half of what it previously was some twenty years ago.

In spite of the reduced acreage and lowered markets since that time, leading rice industry authorities say that due to the increased acreage yields, and better techniques in production and drying, the all-around advances in industry, the figures are still near those given in about 1952. This would give the East Texas rice growing area an approximate annual income of \$175 million annually.

An average rice farmer must have an investment

in lands, buildings, equipment and other things necessary to his farming operations, of approximately \$50,000. His equipment alone will run about \$25,000 on the average, and many farmers have twice that much invested.

So the rice industry has come from the ox-team power in less than a century to fast moving mechanization which has transferred wilderness into prosperous communities and towering cities of today.

Southern Rice Jambalaya

4 — pork chops	2 — c — water
1 — c — rice	1 — t — garlic salt
1 — c — tomato sauce	1 — small grated onion
1 — c — mushrooms	salt and pepper to taste

Fry chops in heavy skillet until well browned. Leave about 3 T ... fat with chops in skillet. Wash rice, drain, add to chops and allow to brown. Stir often to keep from scorching. Add remaining ingredients and put lid on. Cook slowly until well done.

CHAPTER 12

REFINERY

Jefferson County's largest industry, the Magnolia Petroleum, located on the Neches River in Beaumont, Texas, Jefferson County, had its beginning in 1903, when the plant began operation. The refinery began operation with some 250 employees and 89 acres of equipment, consisting primarily of 50 batch stills. Initially it processed 5,000 barrels of crude every four days, getting deodorized stove naphtha, kerosene, gas, oil and loss products.

The refinery changed ownership three times prior to the formation of Magnolia on April 24, 1911. In

1925, that company became a wholly owned affiliate of Socony Mobil.

The refinery is one of the most potent single factors in the county's stable economy. Two natural assets with which this community was endowed were the magnets that drew the refinery to this area. The newly developed oil field, Spindletop, provided the raw materials to keep the wheels of the industry humming and the Neches River provided an artery of transportation over which its finished product could move to market.

Those familiar with the plant as it is today would have difficulty visualizing the George A. Burt and Company Refinery of 1903.

Construction on the Burt Refinery was started when the Spindletop was about a year old. The company to construct the plant was formed in December, 1901, and in 1902, the refinery was going up.

It cost five million dollars to erect that little Burt Refinery, a gaint in those early days. Five hundred men were employed to put the plant up. After the structure was completed, a staff of 250 employees was hired to keep the plant in operation 24 hours per day.

Men worked seven days a week. Two shifts ran the plant. One shift came on at 7 a.m. and worked until 5 p.m. and the other came on at 5 p.m. and worked until 7 a.m.

Men on night shifts worked by the light of oil lamps. In areas where vapors might be dangerous, these lamps were glassed in. Barracks were maintained near the refinery for workers who wanted to live there.

A boarding house was operated near the plant for men who lived in those barracks. The transportation system at that time consisted of two horses, a surrey and a wagon. Mules provided power for heavy work.

On May 12, 1903, not long after the refinery had gone into operation, Security Oil Company took over the plant. In 1911, John Sealy and Company took over the plant. Expansion of the plant began almost immediately. Ten batch stills were added in less than a year.

In 1916, an expansion program which has scarcely slowed and has never actually stopped in the succeeding 39 years was under way.

That same year too, another red letter accomplishment was a matter of record. The first ocean-going vessel, "The Vesta" moved in from the Gulf of Mexico and through the channel to Beaumont, in Jefferson County, and took on a cargo of 37,000 barrels of gasoline for eastern markets.

By 1917, the Magnolia Refinery was "up to its neck" providing essentials for World War I. Gasoline production was boosted to take care of the needs.

Today, according to Magnolia officials, the plant covers 1500 acres, employs 3075 people and has a crude run capacity of 220,000 barrels daily. Equipment includes 60 processing units, hundreds of miles of pipeline, storage tanks, warehouses, repair shops, office buildings and docks for ocean-going tankers which wind their way up the forty-foot-deep, 49-miles-long channel from the Gulf of Mexico.

The plant is the largest in the world-wide Socony Mobil system, is fifth biggest in the U.S., sixth in the world. Daily it circulates enough water—about 538,000,000 gallons—to supply the domestic needs of a city the size of San Francisco. It produces and consumes as much electricity (956,000 KWH) as 122,000 families normally use. It burns about 168,000,000 cubic feet of fuel gas and uses some 11,000,000 cubic feet of compressed air.

The plant maintains: a modern medical center, with two physicians, three full-time nurses, a lab and X-ray technicians, and complete clinical facilities. A complete fire department, with modern equipment designed especially for oil fire fighting. More than 2,000 employees are trained in fire-fighting techniques.

Products total about 400, including automotive and aviation gasolines, jet fuels, lubricating oils, waxes, kerosenes, home heating oils, diesel fuels, residual fuels, greases, and liquefied petroleum gases (LPG) for heating and cooking fuels in rural areas. To this list will be added, in 1961, a petrochemical building block—ethylene. A 380,000,000 pound-per-year unit is now being built.

Major Processes consist of crude distillation—the initial breakdown of crude into its component parts by first distilling, then capturing vapors as they condense. Five refinery units handle this phase.

Cracking—splitting heavy molecules into lighter ones for making gasoline and heating oils. Refinery has five “cat crackers,” including the world’s newest and largest of its type (330-foot-tall TCC 5, with capacity of 27,800 barrels daily).

Alkylation—“builds up” molecules—as opposed to cracking. Combines high-octane gases to make high-octane liquid, mainly for aviation gasoline. Two alkylation units. Reforming—makes high-octane gasoline from low-octane gasoline by reshaping molecules. Two units —PtR 1 and PtR 2—are reformers here.

Lube Wax—produced from crude distillate and residuum by solvents and refrigeration. Six units, filtering equipment, and the latest of blending and packaging facilities are utilized in this phase of operations.

Of the plant’s 3075 employees, 2400 work in union-

covered jobs. The types of refinery jobs are many. To name a few: unit operators, machinists, electricians, pipefitters, engineers, stenographers, clerks, sailors—even gardeners and photographers.

Refineries have been ranked among the most highly automated of all manufacturing plants, because of their use of hairline, trigger-quick controls on processing units to turn out the quantity and quality of petroleum demanded today. One result: for every man who helps operate a unit, one and one-half more are needed for maintenance.

Approximately 600 machinists, welders, boilermakers and pipefitters maintain units and pipelines. It takes another 55 employees to service the 11,00 instruments that help control operations.

Transportation of men and material alone occupies 118 men and 355 pieces of equipment ranging in size from 40-ton cranes to motor scooters.

WELCOME!

To help you enjoy your visit to our plant, we have prepared this information sheet. Points of interest are numbered in the order in which you will see them; the guide will point them out. The tour will last approximately 40 minutes. PLEASE DO NOT SMOKE while in the refinery.

1. Office Area—Main office building erected in 1919, also here are Office Annex, Technical Building and a combined office-cafeteria building. Across the street are two laboratory buildings.
2. Garage—The refinery's 355 pieces of equipment, ranging from 40-ton cranes to motor scooters, are serviced and repaired here. A dispatcher here keeps constant radio contact with the refinery's trucks and jeeps.

3. Switchyard—There are 10 miles of railroad track within the refinery.
4. Truck Loading Rack—Four trucks at once can be loaded here. These facilities, supplied by remote control pumps, can pour out 14 different products at a rate exceeding 500 gallons a minute.
5. Wharf Area—Employees load an average of one ship a day; average loading time is 10 hours. Most ships carry gasoline, heating oil and other products to the East Coast. Project depth of the Neches River channel is 40 feet. Distance from the Gulf: 49 miles.
6. Ethyl Plant—Here, tetraethyl lead, and anti-knock agent, is added to gasoline.
7. Tank Farm Area—This area contains blending tanks and tanks of finished products for wharf delivery.
8. TCC Units—Thermoform Catalytic Cracking units. In these, gas oils and heavy distillates are broken up or “cracked” into gasoline, heating oil and fuel oil. TCC 5, 330 feet high, is the tallest structure in the refinery.
9. Water Station—About 538,000,000 gallons of water a day, enough to supply the domestic needs of a city the size of San Francisco, are circulated through the refinery daily. Most of the water is for cooling and is used over and over again.
10. Fire Station and Safety Storeroom—The refinery has modern equipment especially designed for oil fire fighting. More than 2,000 employees have been trained in fire fighting.
11. Storehouse—Thousands of different items are stocked in this fire-proof building. Fork-lift trucks

do much of the loading and unloading of heavier materials.

12. Machine Shop & Electrical Shop—Facilities for repairing most of the machinery and electrical apparatus used in the refinery are located here.
13. Mechanical Office Building—The people in charge of the refinery's maintenance program have offices here.
14. Instrument Shop—The thousands of devices that measure, indicate and record refinery flows, temperatures, levels and pressures are repaired here.
15. Ketone Unit—In this unit wax is removed from oil by use of solvents, chilling and filtering.

South Plant

16. Alkylation 1—This unit produces an ingredient for blending into high octane gasoline.
17. Power Plant 2—Supplies electricity and steam for the South Plant.
18. Pipe Stills—These obsolete crude distillation units are being torn down. They have been replaced by Crude Unit A, a new unit you'll see in a few minutes.
19. Platinum Reformers—These units change low octane naphthas into high octane gasoline. The platinum-type catalyst they use costs about \$25,000.00 a ton.
20. Crude Unit A—This unit can process more than 100,000 barrels of crude a day. It is the largest lube producing crude unit in the world.
21. Blending and Packaging Plant—This huge facility, opened last year, is one of the most modern in the industry. More than 120 different Mobil lubricating products are blended and packaged here.

CHAPTER 13

PORT OF BEAUMONT GATEWAY TO THE WORLD

The Port of Beaumont's fascinating history dates back to the 1800's when the Neches River was only a lazy stream of no practical value. Today the Port is one of America's busiest inland seaports.

It was not by accident but by dilligent effort of sustained activity and planning by a few farsighted men who saw the possibilities of utilizing the stream which flowed leisurely by their city that made Beaumont an inland seaport.

According to records the first interest manifested in a commercial waterway in this part of the state was back in 1852, when the federal government appropriated \$5,000 for a survey of various bays and rivers, including Galveston, Sabine Lake, and the Neches River.

Since nothing much developed from that survey, another appropriation was made in 1873, this time for \$2,000, and still another one in 1875. The resultant report made a more favorable impression on federal authorities, for \$20,000 was allotted for improving facilities at Sabine Pass.

The Neches River was first specifically considered in 1880. A huge sand bar extended across the river at one point, and in most places the depth was little more than three or four feet. The river was dredged and bar obstruction removed.

In 1892 the United States District Engineer, Major James B. Queen, in charge of Gulf harbors, went to Sabine Lake. Sensing distinct development possibili-

ties, he recommended that a survey be made to dredge a channel through the lake and mouths of the Neches and Sabine Rivers.

Completed in 1896, the survey report specified three locations for the dredging of channels through Sabine Lake along the Texas shore and along the Louisiana shore, recommending the latter as the most satisfactory route.

This recommendation stirred up the indignation of those men who had worked so diligently on the Neches River project. They put on their fighting clothes and went to bat. Congressman Sam Bronson Cooper of Beaumont began fighting in earnest for the course of action that would favor his home town.

Cooper kept on plugging until an appropriation for \$125,000 was secured for dredging a canal from the mouth of the Sabine and Neches Rivers to Taylor's Bayou, provided for the free utilization of the Port Arthur Canal. In 1905, authorization of a nine-foot depth of canal along the Texas shore was obtained, the cost thereof not to exceed \$436,500. This canal was completed in 1908, and agitation for deep water began.

It didn't take much talk to convince the public that creating a port at Beaumont would be the making of an important trade center and a great accomplishment by the supporters of the town. The thought foremost in mind was how to face the legal and financial obstacles to the project.

W. P. Hobby, then publisher of the Beaumont Enterprise, outlined a plan for issuing bonds, and delved into State laws searching for constitutional authority. He found nothing to prevent the formation of a navigation district empowered to issue bonds, and a bill was introduced in the State Legislature and passed

in 1909. A committee was formed in Beaumont to proceed with the steps necessary to make the district here a reality.

A deep water rally was held on April 28, 1909 to acquaint the public with the merits of the project. On July 8, a bond election issue carried (by a vote of 1279 to 80) and on July 19, the new Navigation Board was named to include the following Commissioners: Col. W. S. Davisson, President of the First National Bank, Mr. Joe E. Broussard and Mr. J. Frank Keith. The dream of deep water had its beginning. The Beaumont Navigation District took over its function of developing the Neches River Waterway, and the area's industrialization got under way.

During the intermittent years until 1949, the City of Beaumont built and operated the general cargo wharves and facilities situated at the foot of Main Street, in the heart of the city. But growth and stability of the port proved hard to attain. Alternating city administrations either promoted the port as an important business entity, or allowed the port to decline rather than flourish. In the meantime, ninety miles to the west, Houstonians realized the potentialities of Buffalo Bayou, and in 1922 took the port "out of City Hall" and created the Navigation District that rapidly brought that great Texas port to the fore.

Twenty-seven years later, with unpaid-for docks literally crumbling into the river and steamers bypassing Beaumont in increasing numbers, local port enthusiasts pressed forward.

As a result of their efforts, the State Legislature in July 1949 created a new local Port Authority, a governmental agency of the State of Texas authorized by Section 59 of Article 16 of the State Constitution.

The growth of the rejuvenated port in nine short years is a tribute to their vision and perseverance.

The Port today is governed by a board of six Port Commissioners elected to six-year terms of office by voters of the Navigation District.

Among the 154 ports which moved more than one million tons of cargo during the year, 1956, the local port was credited with tonnage totaling 25,731,843, ranking second in Texas and 15th in the nation. The report was based on figures released by the Board for Rivers and Harbors, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, and published in the current issue of World Ports, official publication, of the American Association of Port Authorities. This tonnage includes all commerce on the waterway, as well as general cargo handled by the Port District.

Today the Beaumont waterway extends twenty miles up the Neches River, 48 miles by deep water channel from the Gulf of Mexico; it is one of America's busiest inland ports, with an annual passage of some 5,000 ocean-going vessels moving through the port to sail the seven seas.

Terminal facilities of the Navigation District include seven public wharves of parallel-type or quay system construction, affording wide concrete aprons and a constant water depth of 34 feet below mean low tide at the face of all docks.

Principal cargoes handled at the Port include rice, cotton, rubber, fabricated steel equipment, pressure vessels and tanks, oil field supplies, machinery, sugar, flour and other packaged foodstuff, drummed oil and oil by-products, newsprint, pulp, scrap metal and many others.

The Navigation District owns an estimated 437

acres of valuable waterfront property, available on attractive lease bases to new industry requiring such frontage for purposes of water borne transportation of their products.

The Port is equipped with steam locomotive cranes and a mammoth 60-ton diesel-electric, traveling gantry crane for handling heavy-lift cargoes. Most cargoes are palletized, affording safety and efficiency in handling. There are approximately 20,000 pallets and 60 fork-lift type trucks in service on the public docks, along with other accessorial equipment to assure full mechanization. Many of the mechanical devices and techniques employed in the transportation and warehousing fields have been developed at the Port of Beaumont. Today, an average of 28 steamers call each month at the public wharves, and 41 vessels loaded cargo there during November, a record month.

Beaumont's present Navigation District Commission is comprised of R. A. Coale, President; C. H. LeBlanc, Sr., Vice President; Capt. E. O. Heinrich, R. O. Williams, J. D. Lyons, and Eugene Ohmstede. Jas. H. Hartzog is Director of the Port, assisted by Dow Wynn and F. H. Fredricks, Traffic Manager. O. L. Caywood is Dock Supt. and J. B. Morris is Counsel for the District.

Beaumont owes a debt of gratitude to the determined pioneers of Beaumont—including some of recent date—who so diligently worked toward development of the waterway which has become one of the most active in America. We would not forget to be thankful for the present effort of sustained activity on the part of those who are still planning for a larger and better Port of Beaumont.

Following one of the wettest and coldest winters

on record, (climaxed by an unprecedented ten-inch snowfall on February 13) the Port of Beaumont, Texas reported peak activity during its first quarter of 1960 operations, according to Port Director James H. Hartzog.

Presaging what promises to be the Port's busiest year since creation of the local Port Authority in July, 1949, the three months' period saw a total of 90 general cargo steamers load and/or discharge at the public terminal, not including a greater number of tankers and merchantmen calling at the several oil company terminals of Mobil, Sun Oil, Pure Oil, Atlantic Refining and others.

The Port of Beaumont simultaneously has announced the completion of yet another phase of its continuing rehabilitation and expansion program, initiated in 1953. Just finished is the 74,774 sq. ft. extension of Wharf Sheds 5, 6, 7, built at a cost of \$300,000 defrayed entirely from the Port's operating revenue funds.

Since 1953, all seven general cargo wharves have been rebuilt entirely or extensively rehabilitated, at a cost of nearly \$4,500,000 including the new project just completed. Two-thirds of the costs thereof are being defrayed from port revenue funds, and additional expansion plans will be announced by Port Director Hartzog in the near future, he stated.

During 1959, a total of 397 general cargo vessels called at Beaumont's public wharves, in the service of 46 steamship lines. Twelve lines offered 108 sailings to Continental Europe; 8 others offered 105 sailings to the Far East; 11 lines offered 48 sailings to South & Central America. Fourteen lines placed 40 vessels in Mediterranean, India, Persian Gulf and Red Sea

Ports, while excellent service was offered to other major world port ranges. The Port Authority handled 657,087.68 tons of cargo, including ocean and inland waterway movements during the past year.

BEAUMONT—ONE OF UNITED STATES' PRINCIPAL PORT CITIES

Beaumont, and the Sabine-Neches Waterway, is revealed to be one of the principal export and import centers of the U. S. by the following tabulation of shipping tonnage figures:

Year	Tonnage Beaumont Waterway	Combined Tonnage Beaumont-Pt. Arthur Sabine Pass
1930	11,721,008	
1932	13,218,880	
1933	16,074,456	
1934	15,357,674	
1935	16,573,283	
1936	18,071,751	
1937	20,467,642	41,179,328
1939	20,107,031	40,292,305
1940	19,387,986	38,553,212
1941	20,374,506	40,218,107
1942	9,490,114	20,907,445
1943	7,786,000	14,939,307
1944	8,580,011	16,915,532
1945	13,604,977	26,423,933
1946	23,052,108	43,597,703
1947	23,919,540	47,569,904
1948	26,907,277	49,904,336
1949	20,627,182	45,217,538
1950	21,425,323	41,606,392
1951	22,334,665	45,132,529
1952	21,442,034	45,522,383
1953	23,422,652	46,954,576
1954	22,684,282	42,796,758
1955	22,862,971	44,606,183
1956	25,731,843	50,894,362
1957	25,680,572	49,894,506

The combined tonnage of imports and exports handled by the Sabine-Neches Waterway ports of Beaumont, Port Arthur, Orange, and Sabine Pass is exceeded only by a few U. S. ports.

Source: U. S. Army Engineers, Galveston
Prepared by: Industrial Department
Chamber of Commerce
Beaumont, Texas.

CHAPTER 14

WATER PROBLEM

History reveals that drinking water was a major problem of the pioneers of the early 1880's. This situation was remedied by the establishment of a water barge route from artesian wells to Beaumont.

Captain Nyles Smith, a rugged old sailor, was Beaumont's favorite water boy in the early 1880's. He brought thousands of gallons of water sixteen miles down the Neches River from Lakeview to Beaumont to be bottled and sold for drinking purposes. That was before water mains took water into the homes of the sparsely settled sawmill community.

Even in those days rival companies fought for the patronage of Beaumonters who had no wells from which to get their drinking water. Capt. Smith had charge of the water sales from the artesian wells on the V. Wiess farm at Lakeview.

He made three round trips a week with a tug which towed the barge to and from the Wiess farm. The water was pumped into large tanks mounted on the barge and brought down to a dock located on Brake's Bayou behind the site now occupied by the Beaumont Building Material Company on Pine Street.

Here the precious stuff was bottled in five gallon jugs. Anybody could buy one for twenty-five cents. Regular customers had their water delivered to the

home by a route man who carried the big bottles in horse-drawn wagons.

Business became highly competitive when a rival company began towing in water from Park Farms in Orange County. This was bottled in containers with decorated labels which pointed out that the contents came from deep artesian wells and contained many health giving qualities. They called it Park Farm Lithia water.

Name of the skipper who was Capt. Smith's rival in this business could not be obtained, but the keen competition between the two men was a favorite conversation topic among pioneer Beaumonters according to stories told by old-timers.

It was Captain Smith who furnished the liveliest material for conversation, however. He had sailed the high seas for many years before settling down to haul water for this little sawmill town. The captain had acquired the name of "Gaitor" by which he was known up and down the Neches because rugged old seaman that he was, he had a knack of weaving his tug and barge in and out of danger spots along the snag-filled Neches without losing a splinter off of either.

Legends handed down about Captain "Gaitor" have it that he rarely ever brought his tug in except when he had one hand on the wheel of the tug and the other on a bottle of spirits, from which he imbibed frequently.

The business of selling bottled water in Beaumont flourished from about 1880 until around 1904. During this period, about the only source of water was local wells and cisterns. These were the times, too, when typhoid fever epidemics raged unabated throughout

this section. Townsmen were fearful of drinking locally-drawn water although, of necessity, they had to use it for all other purposes, including bathing and watering their stock. But for drinking purposes it was a toss-up between bottled "Lakeview Farm aqua pura" or Park Farm Lithia Water."

WATER SUPPLY

Beaumont's water supply is obtained from the Neches River. The agricultural and industrial users in the area secure their water requirements from the Lower Neches Valley Authority, which also uses the Neches River as its source of supply.

The L.N.V.A. is a non-profit, non-taxing agency created by a special act of the State Legislature as a political entity of the State of Texas. The area embraced in its jurisdiction is comprised of all or parts of five Southeastern Texas counties.

It was created for the purpose of developing, improving, and distributing the waters of the Neches River for beneficial purposes. It is a self-sustaining agency—not ever having received any gifts, grants, or loans from any governmental agency.

The high quality of the city's water supply is attested by the following analysis:

	P.P.M.
Residue (at 105 degrees C.)	159
Residue (after ignition)	92
Sodium Chloride (NaCl)	59
Sulphate (SO ₄)	31
Silica (SiO ₂)	17
Calcium (Ca)	9
Magnesium (Mg.)	3.8
Fluoride (F.)	0.17
Alkalinity (Erythrosine Indicator)	29
Non-carbonate Hardness	35

Total Hardness _____ 63

Hydrogen Ion Concentration _____ 8.4

All figures, with the exception of Hydrogen Ion Concentration (pH), are "parts per million."

Source: City Chemist, Beaumont, Texas;
Lower Neches Valley Authority

Prepared by: Industrial Dept.,
Chamber of Commerce,
Beaumont, Texas

CITY OF BEAUMONT, TEXAS SCHEDULE OF WATER SERVICE RATES

Inside City Limits

First	4,000 Gallons (Minimum)	\$1.25
Next	96,000 Gallons	.30 Per M Gallons
Next	100,000 Gallons	.29 Per M Gallons
Next	100,000 Gallons	.28 Per M Gallons
Next	100,000 Gallons	.27 Per M Gallons
Next	100,000 Gallons	.26 Per M Gallons
All Over	500,000 Gallons	.25 Per M Gallons

Outside City Limits

Same rates as above, plus 25 percent (25%) added to each monthly bill.

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SCHEDULE OF SEWER SERVICE RATES RATES EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 1, 1952 BASED ON WATER CONSUMPTION

Inside City Limits

First	2,000 Gallons	\$0.75
Next	3,000 Gallons	.10 Per M Gallons
Next	95,000 Gallons	.05 Per M Gallons
Next	400,000 Gallons	.03 Per M Gallons
All Over	500,000 Gallons	.01 Per M Gallons
Minimum Charge Per Month		.75

Maximum Charge Per Month for Single Family

Residence on Separate Meter 1.50

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Bills rendered at above rates are net charges.

Bills are rendered monthly and are payable upon receipt thereof.

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The Water Department is Owned and Operated by the City of Beaumont.

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Source: Water Department, City of Beaumont
Prepared by: Industrial Department
Chamber of Commerce
Beaumont, Texas.

INDUSTRIAL WATER RATES

Supplied to Industries by Lower Neches
Valley Authority

Rates For Untreated River Water

Under	1,000,000 gal.	5½c per M
	1,000,000 gal.	5 c per M
Next	1,500,000 gal.	4½c per M
Next	2,500,000 gal.	4 c per M
Next	5,000,000 gal.	2¾c per M
Over	10,000,000 gal.	2 c per M

Guarantee to take or pay	2,500,000 gal.	3¼c per M
Next	2,500,000 gal.	2¾c per M
Next	5,000,000 gal.	2¼c per M
Over	10,000,000 gal.	2 c per M

Guarantee to take or pay for	5,000,000 gal.	2¾c per M
Next	5,000,000 gal.	2¼c per M
Over	10,000,000 gal.	2 c per M

Guarantee to take or pay for	8,000,000 gal.	2½c per M
Next	2,000,000 gal.	2¼c per M
Over	10,000,000 gal.	2 c per M

Source: Lower Neches Valley Authority
Prepared by: Industrial Department
Chamber of Commerce
Beaumont, Texas

